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THE CRUCIFIXION

The Loyal Catholic

Cornelius J. Warren

Gift of The People of the United States
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To the Armed Forces and Merchant *Marine*



INFANT REDEEMER
King of the World.

THE LOYAL CATHOLIC

SOME TOPICS OF INTEREST
TO THE
DEVOTED SONS AND DAUGHTERS
OF
HOLY MOTHER CHURCH

By the
Rev. Cornelius J. Warren, C. SS. R.
(Second Edition)



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*** WILLIAM CARDINAL O'CONNELL,**


Archbishop of Boston

Permissu Superiorum C. SS. R.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I The Loyal Catholic . . .	9
II Moral Courage	19
III Fidelity in Little Things .	31
IV The Book of Books . . .	41
V The Study of the Crucifix .	51
VI True Devotion	62
VII What Scripture Says of Faith	70
VIII Superstition	78
IX The Eucharistic Life of Christ	86
X Christian Hope	97
XI Daily Visits	106
XII Frequent Communion . . .	116
XIII The Will of God	127
XIV Our Lady of Perpetual Help	139
XV The Battle of Lepanto . . .	146
XVI The Redemption of Captives.	151
XVII Socialism	157

P R E F A C E


 HIS little volume is offered to the public with the hope that its perusal will prove of interest and edification. The title of the first article is given to the whole work, and not without reason. The idea of Catholic loyalty spreads its rays over every topic under consideration, giving light and warmth to each. Or perhaps it were better to say, the separate subjects treated are so many converging rays that find their center in the focus of Catholic loyalty. At a time when disloyalty and rebellion are becoming the order of the day outside the true Church of God; when papers and pamphlets are spread broadcast urging the people to unfurl the standard of revolt, it seems opportune to add our voice of encouragement to the devoted sons and daughters of Holy Church. We trust this little volume will contribute its share to steady the wavering, to stimulate the generous and to inspire all with the hope of a never-fading crown of glory—the reward of a loyal Catholic.

THE AUTHOR.

THE LOYAL CATHOLIC

CHAPTER I

"Master, go on and I will follow Thee
To the last gasp with truth and loyalty."

AN'S life on earth is a warfare," according to the inspired pages of Holy Writ. If we are to come off victorious in the struggle we must buckle on our armor and prepare ourselves for the fray. "Put ye on the armor of God," says St. Paul (Eph. vi), "that ye may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil. . . . In all things taking the shield of faith and the sword of the spirit which is the word of God." The enemy is lurking around us and ever on the alert, watching for an opportunity, waiting to catch us off our guard, searching out a vulnerable spot where he may deal us an effective and perhaps a fatal blow.

Living in a country such as ours, we may not be blind to the effects of our environment. By it we are influenced to a perceptible degree. "Our

lot is cast in a non-Catholic country; we are constantly moving among Protestants, Jews, agnostics, and unbelievers; we frequent their assemblies; we share in their amusements; we visit their houses; we correspond and transact business with them; we interchange courtesies; in fact, we live on terms of familiarity with all sorts and conditions of men and are glad to number them among our friends, associates and companions. I am not saying this because I think we ought to be censured for it, as something wrong in itself. Indeed, to a great extent it is unavoidable. I am simply stating the fact—describing briefly the nature of the atmosphere in which we live and move and have our being.”—Mgr. J. S. Vaughan.

In addition to all this, the press of our country can hardly be called Catholic. It is Protestant and heretical where it is not actually infidel. The countless books and reviews, papers and magazines, and the literature of all kinds that cover our tables and fill our libraries, are for the most part, to say the least, non-Catholic in their tone and sentiment. And it were to be wished that they were never anything worse. But unfortunately much of our literature is openly anti-Catholic, the output of authors and writers who seem to think their calling in life is simply to misrepresent and vilify the Church. Now these things fall into our hands, or we procure them perhaps all unconscious

of the danger; we hear and see opinions expressed, theories advanced, tenets defended, and perhaps with great parade of learning, beautiful language, specious reasoning, and, by and by, we begin to wonder if it is not true. How could it be false, we are apt to say, it is all so beautiful and plausible, and where is the harm? And thus unconsciously we are breathing in the vitiated atmosphere—an atmosphere charged with heresy and unbelief—an atmosphere heavy with the wisdom of the world, but we forget that “the wisdom of the world is folly in the eyes of God.”

And what is the result? Well, what could it be? Unless we are very much on our guard—unless we are careful to use an antidote to render ourselves immune—the result will be, must be, that we become tainted by our surroundings, infected by the noxious germs, and our faith will lose its vigor. Scientists tell us that it is the tendency of every organism, of every living being, to adapt itself to its environment. Every creature capable of alteration will little by little be influenced by the conditions of its surroundings. Thus, for example, fish and other creatures living in deep pools at the bottom of dark caves where the light of the sun never penetrates, are influenced by the gloom around them and gradually become blind, and in a few generations are without any serviceable organs of sight. The darkness in

which their lives are passed robs them at last of even the power of seeing.

Now, the danger we have especially to guard against is just this adapting ourselves too readily to our religious surroundings. There will always exist such a tendency; there is no denying that fact. But we must remember that we possess a free will, which has the power to resist the tendency, and which ought to use its power in so doing. To illustrate what I am saying. The spiritual atmosphere is filled with the odor of broad-mindedness and liberality. It has become the non-Catholic slogan, the war-cry of those outside the Church. It sounds very well, and, taken as it stands, who could reasonably object to it? Who, for example, would care to be relegated to the class of narrow-minded, self-centered "has-beens," not abreast of the times, but living in by-gone days and dragging after them the weight of exploded theories and abandoned doctrines? Surely this is not very agreeable, and yet the whole trouble springs from a wrong conception of what broad-mindedness and liberality really mean. It is all very well to have our own opinions and to have them broad and liberal when there is question of choice or when we are free to hold one or the other. But when a doctrine is laid down by God's infallible word as certain and undeniable, it is altogether outside the sphere of

opinion, and discussion as to its broadness or narrowness is most certainly out of place. Such, for instance, would be the doctrine: "One church is not as good as another," for there is only one good, one true Church of God—the Catholic Church. But you will hear Catholics sometimes say, "They don't see why Catholics may not attend Protestant service as Protestants attend Catholic service." The difference is simply this: the Protestant in the case attends the true service, which is never forbidden, whereas the Catholic would be attending false worship, which is always forbidden.

It is called broad and liberal to deny the existence of hell or the eternity of its fire, because forsooth it seems so repugnant to the mercy of God, that God "who wills all men to be saved and none to perish." But they forget that it is they themselves who write their own sentence of condemnation. God offers them the reward of eternal life, but how can His justice grant such a reward if they do nothing to merit it, but, on the contrary, willingly and deliberately do what He has forbidden under the pain of eternal punishment! Again, there are some Catholics who have their own views about mixed marriage and about family life, views altogether opposed to the teaching of Holy Church. Occasionally we run across individuals who have very set notions regarding re-

ligious life; very set indeed, but set in the wrong mould. The talk of the neighbors who think it a sort of pious humbug, their own little prejudices have so warped their opinions as to bring them out of plumb with the straight line that ought to be the Catholic's guide—and that straight line is the mind and teaching of our Holy Church, "the pillar and ground of truth" (1 Tim. iii, 15), the infallible guide of whom Christ said: "He that heareth you heareth me" (Lu. x, 16).

But they will tell you, "We don't see things in that way; these things appear differently to us, and we are guided accordingly in our opinion and statement of them." What an unconscious admission this is! They do not see things in this light, it is very true; but why? Recall the fact of the fish losing their sight owing to the dark surroundings and you have the solution of the difficulty. These short-sighted, purblind Catholics have been influenced by their environment. They have rendered themselves blind to the true doctrine, and have almost unconsciously made their own, opinions that have their origin in and fatten on the love of ease, self-will, passion, in a word, everything that is opposed to the truth.

Their faith has lost its lustre. You must have noticed the silent and ceaseless action of the atmosphere on certain polished metals. "Take, for instance, a sharp blade of glittering steel, brightly

polished and highly tempered. Expose it for a period to the air and in an incredibly short time it becomes wholly changed. First it loses its peculiar gloss and lustre; then its polished surface grows dull and dim, and its keen edge blunted and ragged. Upon this there follows a further process of decay, and a chemical change takes place. Slowly and surely the rust settles upon it and corrodes and eats away its very substance, so that at last one can scarcely recognize in the dark, rusty object the once bright and beautiful blade."

And just so it may happen in the spiritual order. Our faith, once bright and beautiful, may lose its lustre and become coated with the rust of indifference if left exposed to the corrosive atmosphere of our irreligious surroundings. Now, that the danger exists and constantly menaces us, no one will venture to deny. The question, therefore, that presents itself to every earnest man and woman is this: "How shall I escape the danger? How shall I avoid the evil of my surroundings?" And I answer, that your surest safeguard is the determination to be a *Loyal Catholic*, a Catholic in every fibre of your being; not a half-hearted, milk-and-water, temporizing, weak-kneed or jelly-fish Catholic of the mollicoddle type, but a staunch, sincere, uncompromising Catholic—a faithful soldier of Christ, prepared to follow the standard of the cross into the midst of

the fray, and to do and die rather than sacrifice one iota of principle or practice of our Holy Mother the Church.

Did we but stop to consider what the Church really is and the sacred function she performs, we might feel a more *loyal* spirit stirring within us. "She is the creation of Christ Himself, the infinite God, and she is destined to represent Him. She exists to stem the tide of evil, to point out error, to strike a warning note when the sacred deposit of divine truth is in danger of being tampered with. She possesses a divine life and is informed and vivified by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. Even when she does not pronounce a final and infallible sentence, her teaching is of the highest authority and not to be easily set aside. With her many saintly Pontiffs, her Archbishops and Bishops, with her supernatural life, her wide and varied experience and her tradition of well-nigh two thousand years, the Church is recognized even by many non-Catholics as the most enlightened governing power in the world. We may, then, rest content to accept her as our mistress, to be directed by her laws and enlightened by her wisdom. In spite of what the world may say, we may feel safe in her keeping, and shall realize that he who puts her aside and makes his own faltering reason his sole guide chooses a veritable fool for his counsellor."

Be not deceived by the idea so prevalent outside the Church, that a restraint is put on the intellect by following the guidance of the Church, even though she claims the prerogative of infallibility. It is a restraint if you will, but a very healthy restraint,—a valuable safeguard. If, when travelling through an unknown region, you consider it a restraint on your liberty to have a guide show you the safest and shortest road instead of letting you wander about in dangerous out-of-the-way paths, then the guidance of Holy Church is just such a restraint. Surely there is nothing objectionable about the restraint put on the mariner when he has to use a compass and a chart. What the compass and the chart are to the mariner, the guidance of Holy Mother Church is to the Catholic, and the *loyal Catholic* is grateful to the maternal hand that guides him. He knows that in truths not yet defined he may investigate for himself, never losing sight, however, of his infallible guide, to whom he can refer in difficulties that exceed the limits of his reason and experience. But when doctrines are defined as when the road is mapped out, and it is the only road to his destination, then reason itself dictates the necessity of following an infallible guide.

Such is the spirit that animates the true and loyal Catholic. He loves his religion and seeks to grow in the knowledge of his faith, for “knowl-


edge begets love." He is grateful for his faith, for he considers it the most precious inheritance man can possess; and, in fine, he strives to bring his life more and more into conformity with the teachings of his faith, hoping in time to realize the ideal proposed by the great apostle, Saint Paul, when he said: "The just man liveth by faith" (Heb. x, 38), and "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me" (Gal. ii, 20). "I have fought the good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; as to the rest there is laid up for me a crown of glory which the Lord, the just Judge, will render to me in that day" (2 Timothy iv, 7).

"Life is real, life is earnest
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest
Was not spoken of the soul."
—Psalm of Life.

CHAPTER II

MORAL COURAGE

"The heights by great men reached and kept,
Were not attained by sudden flight;
But they, while their companions slept,
Were toiling upward in the night."
—Longfellow.

 HE history of our private life is little else than the recital of our wrestlings with satan and sin, the chronicle of our victories and our defeats in battling with the world, the flesh and the devil. Now, when a soldier goes to battle he needs weapons, it is true, but he needs courage more. And just so it is with us. In struggling against the forces that make for our eternal destruction, we have great need of courage, and therefore the exhortation of the Royal Psalmist: "Let thy heart take courage" (Ps. xxvi, 14).

Courage is a quality of virtue that we admire by instinct. We need no teacher to tell us that it is an excellent thing to be brave. The lack of courage is recognized as a defect in our character. If in our own hearts we find the want of it, we

are not only sorry but secretly ashamed. We try to conceal it, cover it up, and even hide it from ourselves, for there is nothing we are so reluctant to admit as cowardice. Courage is an honorable virtue. Men have always loved and praised it. It lends glory and splendor to the life in which it dwells. The literature of courage has always been immensely popular, and the history of the brave is written in letters of gold. In the strange and lurid annals of war we love to read of deeds of self-forgetful daring which stand forth prominently amid the din and smoke of the battlefield. We love to read of these angels of the battlefield, the Sisters of Charity, who bid defiance to shot and shell to minister to the wants of the wounded and dying. Truly, a war is a dark, black cloud hovering over the land, but if that cloud has a silver lining, it is the courageous charity and the charitable courage of those noble women. We love to read of the courageous mother who was brave enough to resist the cravings of maternal love in order to be true to her God. We find in the acts of the Martyrs that a Christian woman was brought forth to be burned alive. Her little boy of five years was at her side. When fire was put to the stake, the boy was held before her to increase her torture. The flames mounted and burned her body, but amid the sufferings and cries she called out to her boy: "My child, love only

the good God. He will bring thee to thy mother." The little one cried out: "I love only the good God," and, breaking away from the soldiers, he ran up to his mother, and, with her, he went through flames to his God. We love to read of, to hear of, and to see examples of true courage in all parts of the Christian world; men and women leaving the happiness of home and loved ones to labor and suffer and die for the bodily and spiritual welfare of their fellow-beings, the young, the old, the poor, the orphan, the sick, the afflicted, the dying and the dead. We love to see the courage of a son or daughter who will make any and every sacrifice to lighten the cares of an aged father or mother; or toil, day in and day out, to care for some orphaned brother or sister. Their cross is heavy at times, but the Cyrenean that helps them to bear it is the courage that fills their generous souls.

We love to think of a courageous soul whose devotion to duty leads him to sacrifice his very life. Father Capella was laboring zealously in the environs of Paris, where he was taken very sick. One day, as he lay on his couch, hovering between life and death, a friend came to see him. In the course of the conversation the visitor mentioned an unfortunate man who was on the point of death, but had refused to call for the priest of God.

On hearing this Father Capella stretched out his arms and said to those in attendance: "Bring me to him, I beg of you." "Oh no, Father," they said, "it would mean your death." But he insisted, and, finally yielding to his entreaties, they brought him to the sick man. "My dear man," said he, "both you and I are at death's door. Are we going to be separated beyond the grave? For love of your immortal soul be reconciled to your God." The sinner was completely overpowered. The sight of such heroism on the part of this dying priest wrought a wonderful change in him, and he confessed his sins with sincere repentance. Father Capella was taken home and died.

Courage is an honorable, a noble virtue, but at the same time it is a very serviceable one. There is hardly any place in which it cannot be practised to advantage. Genius is talent set on fire by courage. Fidelity is simply daring to be true in small things as well as in great. As many as are the conflicts and perils and hardships of life, so many are the uses and forms of courage. It is necessary as the protector and defender of the other virtues. It is the standing army of the soul. Unless we are brave we can hardly be truthful or generous or just or pure or kind or loyal. Meekness does not spell weakness; meekness means strength; it betokens the courage we have to repress the promptings of wounded feeling, and

present a calm, unruffled exterior when perhaps a storm is raging within. Humility is not weakness; humility is strength . . . and the degree of humility we possess is the measure of courage we have to crush our inmate pride. Purity is not weakness; purity is strength and a virtue that often gives evidence of courage truly heroic—a courage that must battle against forces from within and without; a courage that must never grow daunted, for the fight goes continually on, and every enemy overcome seems like the dragon in the fable—where one head was cut off seven others sprang up in its place. True piety is not weakness; true piety is strength, and it requires a never-failing source of courage to be faithful to one's practices of piety, for human nature hates to be prodded all the time, and there are times when it will kick against the goad. In one word constant, unswerving fidelity to the duties of our state of life presupposes no ordinary share of moral courage. It takes courage to rise promptly in the morning; it takes courage at times to pray. It takes courage to assist at Mass when we are not obliged to do so, and even at times when we are. It takes courage to go frequently to Confession and Communion as we are often exhorted to do. It takes courage to suppress a harsh word and to utter a kind one instead. It takes courage to forgive an injury and not to repay in kind. It takes

courage to frown on an unsavory conversation and run the risk of being considered a prude. It takes courage to turn our curious eyes away from what may endanger our soul. It takes courage to follow the call of God to embrace a life of greater perfection. It takes courage to do what God commands and avoid what God forbids, for all the evil effects of sin were not removed when the sin was washed away. It takes courage, in a word, to live as God would have us live, and, above all things else, it takes courage to die.

Let us now try to understand the difference between courage and some of the things that are often mistaken for it. First of all, there is a sharp distinction between courage and recklessness. The reckless person is an ignorant person; he rushes into danger without knowing what danger is. The brave man is intelligent. He faces danger because he understands it and is prepared to meet it. The drunkard who, in a delirium of intoxication, runs into a burning house is not brave; he is only stupid. But the clear-eyed hero who makes his way with every sense alert and every nerve strung, into the flames to rescue some little child certainly proves his courage.

The more we are awake to the perils of life the grander is our possibility of being truly brave. To drift along, as some people do, through the world of sin as if there were nothing in it to fear;

to eat and sleep and be merry under the arch of heaven and as if there were no One above it to dread—what is that but to play the part of the fool who said in his heart: "There is no God," there is no sin, there is no judgment. But to be alive to the dangers of sin that surround us on every side; to be aware of the consequence of defeat in the battle of life; to know that we ourselves are writing the sentence that shall decide our eternal destiny—to realize all this, I say, and still to be up and astir, doing battle in the noble cause, rallying around the standard of the cross, with unbounded confidence in our Leader, Jesus Christ, that is courage. To plunge heedlessly into the rapids is not courage but recklessness, for you will be carried down over the falls. To plunge into the rapids of sin, the danger or the occasion that leads inevitably to sin, is not courage, though you may boast of your ability to escape from the danger before it is too late.

There is another distinction between courage and insensibility. Some natures are so constituted that they do not feel pain very keenly. Their nerves are sluggish and deeply hidden. This may be an advantage or a disadvantage, for if they escape some possibilities of suffering they must also lose many possibilities of enjoyment. To persons of this temperament fear is comparatively a stranger. They can move along with in-

difference in situations where a more sensitive nature would be profoundly agitated. But we must not suppose that this insensibility makes them brave. It simply exempts them in some measure from the necessity of courage.

The bravest soul is that which feels the tremor and resists it, shrinks from the flame and faces it. Never was there a better soldier than the old French marshal, Montluc, who said he had often gone into battle shaking with fear and had recovered courage only after saying a prayer. A pale face, a trembling hand, yes, even a heart that stands still with dread may belong to a hero who is brave enough to carry them in the midst of conflict, without faltering or failing, straight on to victory or death. Courage does not consist in the absence of fear but in the conquest of it.

Take it in little things. Here is a great, dull, heavy dray-horse. What is it for him to move stolidly on through noises which do not alarm him and pass strange objects which he does not notice? But when the high-mettled, keen-sensed thoroughbred goes through the same tumult and past the same objects with every nerve and muscle quivering, that is courage. It requires no great effort for a traveller inured to hardships and trained to steadiness to guide his frail canoe through the foaming rapids. But for a person by nature sensitive and timid, to sit quiet and silent in the boat

not because he has no fear but because he will not yield to it—that is brave; that is courage.

The same thing is true in moral trials. There are some people to whom reproach and ridicule and condemnation mean little. They simply do not care. But there are others to whom an unkind word is like a blow, and the sneer like a sword thrust, while the breath of contempt has the heat of flames. And when they endure these things and will not be driven by them from the path of duty, they are truly courageous.

There is one more distinction that needs to be drawn—the distinction between courage and daring. The distinction is not one in kind but in degree. For daring is only a rare and exceptional kind of courage.

It is for great occasions: the battle, the shipwreck or the conflagration. But courage in the broader sense is an every-day virtue. It includes the possibility of daring if it is called for. But from hour to hour, in the long, steady run of life, courage manifests itself in quieter, humbler forms—in patience under little trials, in perseverance in distasteful labors, in endurance of suffering, in resisting continual and familiar temptations, in hope and cheerfulness and activity and fidelity and truthfulness and kindness, and those homely virtues that may find a place in the narrowest and most uneventful life. There is no duty so small,

no trial so slight that it does not afford room for true and genuine courage.

And now how are we to obtain it? What is it that really strengthens the heart and makes it brave? There are many things we might consider, but which we must pass over with a mere mention. For example, a simple and wholesome life, plain food and vigorous exercise are conducive to physical and moral courage. A steady regard for high moral principles; a healthful course of reading; friendship with brave and true and single-minded; a habit of self-forgetfulness and consecration to duty—all these are very good. Bishop Spalding says: "What we steadfastly desire to be that we become." And this seems quite true. The more earnestly we consider the beauty and utility and perhaps the necessity of some trait of character, the more ardent our desire becomes to acquire it. And an ardent, insatiable desire will always find means to attain its object.

The practice of self-denial is an excellent means of acquiring moral courage. For the most part our courage in life will be employed in resisting and overcoming our spiritual enemies, but the worst of these enemies are we ourselves. Unless we are schooled in the practice of self-denial our courage will be wanting when it is needed most. "The day spent without self-denial," says St. Alphonsus, "is a day lost."

Again, the frequent consideration of models of courage will stimulate our desire to imitate them. Hence the great benefit to be derived from the perusal of the lives of the saints, the noblest heroes and heroines the world has ever seen.

But the fount and source of all true courage is the heart of our Lord and God. Our beloved Saviour's life was preeminently a life of courage. For it required no ordinary courage to be born as He was born, to live as He lived, and above all, to die as He died, abandoned as it seemed by God and man. His life was a life of courage from the cradle to the grave, and He calls out to each and every one of us in accents well suited to enliven and reanimate our drooping spirit: "I have given you an example, that as I have done so you do also" (John xiii, 15). Say often what the apostle said when he felt he must be brave: "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv, 13). And never grow weary of asking your Lord for a noble and generous heart—a heart like that of the Blessed Mother—the bravest of all brave women—that mother that followed in the blood-stained footsteps of her Beloved Son and mingled her tears with the drops of His sacred blood as it trickled down from the cross.


Inspire us, O Lord, with a courage like Thine,
To walk in Thy footsteps each day;
Ne'er let us grow weary, O Savior Divine,
Nor sink with lost heart by the way.

Ah! Mother of sorrow, we turn now to thee,
Thou bravest of brave hearts and true,
Our bark is adrift on a rough, stormy sea
Thou ocean star be e'er in view.

CHAPTER III

FIDELITY IN LITTLE THINGS

"All great things have small beginnings;
Tiny is the bud at first
Which the crimson rose discloses
When the tender sheath has burst;
From the little acorn lying
All unheeded in the grass
Springs the stately oak tree throwing
Grateful shadows as you pass.
So to little daily duties
Grudge not time, nor pains nor care,
They are seedlings God has planted
Precious fruit one day to bear."

 HE disregard of little things is the rock on which many a one's happiness is wrecked. People aspire to great things and overlook the ordinary things of every-day life, and yet every great thing is made up of little things. The neglect of little things breeds carelessness, and the disastrous results of carelessness are legion. Who, for example, could ever estimate the lives lost, the vast number of human beings injured and the tremendous loss of property every year by carelessness?

Neglecting to turn a switch on the railroad or set a signal has ushered hundreds of people into eternity without a moment's warning and brought sorrow to many a home. Just a few little bubbles in a casting and a building is wrecked or a bridge goes down into the river. Just a little flaw in a rail or a wheel or a bit of machinery and scores of people have lost their precious lives. How many accidents are due to the carelessness of railway employees, switchmen and motormen? What big losses are sustained by business establishments owing to the carelessness of their help? The little mistakes of the employees in John Wanamaker's establishments cost the firm \$25,000 a year. The manager of a large Chicago house says he has to station pickets here and there throughout the establishment in order to neutralize the evil effects of carelessness. One business man states that inaccuracy costs the city of Chicago \$1,000,000 in one day. And yet the most of those who make mistakes would say that they are little things to make a fuss about. The little grains of sand go to make up the big mountain, the little drops of water, the great sea. Sixty tiny seconds make a minute, and sixty little minutes make an hour, and hours make days, and days make weeks, and weeks make months, and months make years. And therefore fidelity in little things is of the greatest importance. The Book of

books tells us: "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is greater" (Lu. xvi, 10). And again, in the same holy pages, we read: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant; because thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will place thee over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord" (Mt. xxv, 21).

Now that we may be of this happy number, let us first of all set about all our occupations, even the least important and trifling, with the greatest care and exactness. Our Lord Himself serves as a model and example in this respect. He who created the universe and clothed the blue vault of heaven with stars, and carpeted the earth with flowers, devoted Himself in His foster-father's workshop, to the most insignificant and lowliest work belonging to the trade of a carpenter. St. Anthon, the apostle of Sweden and Denmark, made nets with the same conscientiousness as he preached the word of God to the heathen nations. The great Doctor of the Church, St. Bonaventure, was occupied in washing the plates and dishes in the monastery of Mugello when the papal legates came to confer the Cardinal's hat on him. The holy man continued his occupation, and when he had finished he received the messengers of the Pope who had come to honor him. St. Clare, who came of illustrious and noble parentage, and was

endowed with remarkable beauty and great intellectual capacity, took the keenest delight in serving her religious Sisters in the convent of Assisi, where she was Superioress.

Some fifteen years ago there died in Baltimore a nun, named Agnes Gubert, who possessed such a wonderfully beautiful voice that her teacher, Parini, refused any fee for training it, saying he was sufficiently compensated by being known as "Gubert's teacher." A certain Max Strakosel offered her \$50,000 for a short concert tour and Rubenstein declared that she had the most beautiful voice he had ever heard. But all this did not keep her in the world. At the age of twenty she entered a convent in Georgetown, where, in quiet seclusion, the famous singer performed the humblest and most unimportant duties with the greatest diligence and care.

Any one who wishes to perform great and noble deeds cannot make a better preparation for them than by discharging actively and carefully his small and unobtrusive duties. Take great pains even in small things. Fulfill carefully all the duties that are incumbent on you. Show yourself great in little things. If you want a thing to turn out well as a whole, you must attend to all the smallest parts of it. Michael Angelo, the great artist and sculptor, was once asked why he paid so much attention to trifles, and this is what he

said: "Trifles go to make up perfection, and perfection is no trifle."

They tell of an old blacksmith who took great care in making a chain for a ship's anchor. He realized that no chain is stronger than its weakest link. For a long time it was never used. One night, in a terrific storm, all the ropes and chains were snapped and the boat was in terrible danger. The anchor was thrown over with the chain the old blacksmith had made. The ship tugged violently, and it was evident that every life on board depended on each link of that chain. But it stood the test, and many a grateful heart blessed the care the blacksmith had taken to weld it link by link.

In the second place we should try to employ every little minute of time. The great St. Alphonsus Ligouri made a vow to be always occupied and never to lose a moment of time. This explains how he accomplished so much during his life-time. He was a very zealous priest, an active missionary both in the pulpit and the confessional. He was founder and head of a congregation of priests and nuns, bishop of a diocese that needed his constant attention, and withal he composed over sixty works for the enlightenment and edification of the world. What an example for us to imitate!

We think a minute an insignificant thing, and

while we are thinking another has flown by. How much time, for instance, is frittered away in idle, useless, not to say harmful, talk! Strive to do everything at the right time and in the right order. Many are regular in their irregularities—late for work, and late for church; asleep when they ought to be at work; at work when they ought to be in bed. In consequence, there is nothing but confusion, and often annoyance to others. People who are never on time seldom succeed in life. The world leaves them to one side as it marches along, and all they do is to swell the ranks of the discontented. Do not put off till evening what you can and ought to do in the morning. Do not turn day into night, nor night into day. Have a fixed time for rising and retiring, eating and drinking, going out and coming in, for working and for praying. By this means a great deal of precious time is saved, and we shall realize the truth of the Sacred Writer's words: "There is a time for everything" (Eccles. iii, 1).

Time is saved by avoiding useless occupation and by letting other people's affairs alone. "Let the shoemaker stick to his last," says the Latin proverb. Devote all your attention to the task in hand, and meanwhile let everything else alone. Holy Scripture says: "Whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly" (Eccles. ix, 10). Try never to be idle and to indulge in day-dreaming.

Just count up idly-spent minutes, and when you have reached sixty you have lost an hour. A servant girl used to say jokingly of her mistress: "The lady loses an hour in the morning and hunts for it all the rest of the day." Idleness is the ordinary cause of most of our misfortunes. "I passed by the field of the slothful man," says Scripture, "and by the vineyard of the foolish man; and behold it was all filled with nettles, and thorns had covered the face thereof and the stone wall was broken down" (Pv. xxiv, 30).

Still worse, the idle heart is an open door through which the destroyer of souls can pass unhindered. Slothfulness is the grave of innocence and virtue. The poet Schiller says: "The evil spirit is busy in our leisure time." An English writer expresses the same idea when he says: "Idleness begets crime just as rust in still vapors eats away polished steel." Idleness has been aptly named "The devil's pillow," and there is an old proverb which says: "An idle mind is the devil's workshop."

Let us learn to be industrious. You have heard the fable of the grasshopper and the ant. The industry of the little ant, you know, is proverbial. Well, the ant had worked the whole summer laying aside a store of supplies for the long and dreary winter. The winter had hardly begun when the grasshopper put in an appearance and

begged for something to keep him alive. "What have you done all summer, my friend?" inquired the little ant. "O," replied the grasshopper, "I sang all day." "Very well, my friend," said the ant, "you can dance now."

Have you ever heard of the busy little lady who was always bright and cheerful and astonished others by the amount of work she was able to do? Well, she was asked one day how she managed to do so much, and that, too, all alone. And what do you suppose she said. "My friends," said she, "I have a little servant to help me—a little servant with only one eye." Imagine their amusement when she went to her workbox and, taking out a needle, she said: "Here is my little one-eyed servant who helps me all the day."

A father on his deathbed was troubled because he feared his sons would grow up idle and indifferent to the welfare of the home. So he said: "Boys, you will find a treasure in the field, just where I will not say; but dig for it and you will surely find it there." They dug the field from end to end and turned over the soil, but no treasure did they find. In the autumn the harvest was a very rich one just because the field had been well worked. "Ah, now we see," they said, "this is what father meant. Industry has found the treasure of a rich harvest—the treasure hidden in the field." And last, my dear readers, but not least,

when fighting temptation and sin, we must learn to resist the little beginnings. You can easily pull up a twig of a few days' growth, but not so easily a tree. Allow no temptation to strike deep root, and remember it is little in the beginning to what it may afterwards be. God's aid is always at hand and can be had for the asking. "Ask and you shall receive." (Jn. xvi, 24.) To resist temptation is to grow strong in the virtue against which you are tempted. According to nature's provision when a tree is exposed to the wind, it strikes deeper root and is none the worse for the wind and weather. They tell of a builder picking up a piece of wood as he stood talking with a friend. He turned it over in his hands and said: "See what a beautiful bit of oak this is! Note the fineness of its grain. This wood will take a higher polish than a piece of ordinary oak. Can you guess why?" His companion could not. "Well," he continued, "it is because the tree from which it came had to endure a great deal of buffeting. It did not grow in the forest sheltered by other trees. It stood apart in some field alone, and the wood gets its delicate grain from the battle it had to wage with the elements. It was beaten on every side, and it was this experience of hardship which has given it such exquisite quality of fibre."

What is true of trees, is true of men—they grow best into finest character and manliest

strength and noblest influence in a life of struggle, toil and self-denial—hardness to be endured is a generous opportunity for splendid results in character. The easy life may seem more pleasant, but it does not fit us for the victorious life to come. “Be assured,” says St. Francis de Sales, “that every little triumph gained over the enemies of your soul will shine like a jewel in your crown.” Make use of every opportunity—opportunities are never wanting. What we lack most is the good will to use those that we have. Obstacles you will encounter, but let “stumbling blocks be stepping stones” to renewed effort and certain success. Look upon every day as a leaf in your life’s diary, and on each leaf write something worthy to be kept in the archives of the life beyond the grave.

“Charge not thyself with the weight of a year,
Child of the Master, faithful and dear;
Choose not the cross for the coming week,
For that is more than He bids thee seek;
Bind not the arms for tomorrow’s load
Thou mayest leave that to thy gracious God.
Daily only He saith to thee:
Take up thy cross and follow me.”

CHAPTER IV

THE BOOK OF BOOKS

WHILE the great St. Alphonsus was laboring to save souls among the poor of the city of Naples, another saint was displaying a like activity in the city of Rome. I mean St. John Baptist di Rossi. St. John was born in the town of Voltaggio in the archdiocese of Genoa on Feb. 22, 1689. His parents had not an abundance of this world's goods, but they possessed the wealth of a genuine piety. This priceless heritage was transmitted to their offspring and seems to have been most abundantly shared by John. At home and at school he was a source of edification and an incentive to boys of his own age. It seemed quite natural that in due time he should manifest a desire to consecrate his life to the service of the Church. On the completion of his studies he was ordained priest and entered upon the labors of the ministry. His efforts in the interest of souls were blessed beyond all reckoning,

and the extent of the harvest he reaped will be known only on judgment day.

The zeal that urged St. John "to spend and be spent" in the service of his Master was a consuming fire that stopped at no obstacle when there was question of God's glory and the salvation of souls. And to this fire of his zeal he continually added fuel by the practice of fervent prayer. St. John was a man of prayer. He craved for an opportunity to bury himself in solitude where he could commune with his God alone. He realized that contemplation is "a high and holy exercise and one of marvellous excellence. It is glorious to go up with Moses to the summit of the mount and there contemplate God face to face, receive His divine teaching and speak with him as friend to friend." But he realized, too, that it was God's will and the noblest of vocations to pass from contemplation to action, to go out from the clouds of light, and come down from the heights of Sinai bearing in his hands the tables of the Law to present them to the people gathered below.

St. John used a book for meditation, and this was none other than the Book of books, the Sacred Scripture, and especially the New Testament. The Scripture was his library. To it he confined himself almost exclusively and found it an abundant source of the science of sciences—the knowledge of his God.

Indeed the greatest lights and most learned men the Church has ever produced have drawn most abundantly from this never failing fountain. The famous Mabillon says: "Monks in great numbers were called forth from the cloisters of the Orient and raised to the dignity of bishops, and yet it is an undoubted fact that the knowledge they possessed was drawn from the pages of Holy Writ." They delved deeply into this mine of sacred lore and came forth enriched with the knowledge of sacred things. And thus equipped they entered the arena of the world and crossed swords in victorious conflict with the enemies of God and man.

Thus it was with St. John Baptist di Rossi. He read and re-read and pondered over the Sacred Pages. While he was in his room the Bible lay open on the table before him. If he went out he took the New Testament with him, and if he had a few moments to spare, he drew the volume from his pocket and began to read. Indeed, so thoroughly had the reading and reflecting on the Sacred Book become a part of his life and labors that love for the Holy Scriptures was looked upon as the characteristic mark of his sanctity. On one occasion his friends were anxious to have his portrait drawn, but they knew they would have to do it without his knowledge, else they would never obtain it. By some happy contrivance they man-

aged to secure his picture, and in his hand was a copy of the Sacred Scripture.

And why, we may ask, such reverence, such love for the Sacred Book? Simply because this holy man realized what the Sacred Book is. He realized that the Bible contains the message of God to men. He read therein the account of God's dealing with His people. He read of God's justice and mercy and love. He read how "God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son" to redeem it. He read in the prophets what that Son was to be; he read in the Evangelists what that Son was. And he knew that God was the author of that Sacred Book, though He used human instruments to compose it. Aided by divine revelation and inspired from on high "they wrote with conscious effort of head and heart and hand;" but still they were like the hand that executes what the head commands. God is the author of the Sacred Book.

"The Spirit of Christ was breathed into the Sacred Pages," as Dr. Grannan so beautifully says, and the Spirit of Christ pervades them still. The Incarnate Word of God gives life to the written word. Jesus Christ is the soul, the marrow, the very substance of the Sacred Books. He is the central figure in the Old and New Covenants. Appearing on the border line where the two Testaments meet, the old pointing forward to Him,

the new looking backwards towards Him, He filled both prophet and apostle with all the revealed truth needed at the time. Even the Old Testament shines, but it shines like the moon with a borrowed light, with a light borrowed from Him.

The Messianic idea is the golden thread that runs through the entire Old Testament warp and woof, and gives to it whatever beauty and value it possesses. Of a truth the Old Testament existed only for Him, and without Him it never would have existed. If you take Him out of it what remains? And what is the remainder worth? Worth as much as the figure without the reality, as the shadow without the substance or as the shell without the kernel. The prophecies, histories, types and laws point to Him like converging rays of light, for Christ is the end of the law. "The Bible," continues the same writer, "is to all other books what heaven is to earth, so far is it above them all. It has heights and depths of thought reaching into the Infinite. It is full of the mysteries of time and eternity, of God and man, of heaven and earth, of life and death, of sin and grace, of struggles, defeats and victories. It is so simple that a child can understand it. It is so profound that an Augustine cannot fathom it. It speaks of God in a thousand ways; through dogma, moral law, ethics, philosophy, history, bi-

ography, and ceremony; in prose and poetry, in psalms, hymns, and canticles; in sacrifice and sacraments; in the pillar of fire and in the cloud, in dreams and visions, in types and symbols, in allegories and parables; all so many golden links in the long chain of the divine Revelation of God, extending down through the ages and ending in the last great theophany in which the Word of God appeared in the flesh and dwelt amongst us and we saw His glory, the glory of the only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth."

Such is the Book of books entrusted to the care of God's kingdom on earth, the holy Catholic Church, the interpreter of God's adorable will. Is it to be wondered at that she has so zealously guarded her sacred trust? Is it a matter of surprise that she should condemn every effort to misinterpret, misquote or supplant the Sacred Volume, even though that attempt have the approval of a king? Imperfect though the old Douay version may be as far as the English is concerned, it contains the doctrine pure and undefiled. To ask a Catholic to accept a Protestant version, King James or any other, would be like putting a rebel flag into the hands of a loyal soldier. It may be very much like his own; it may even be more ornamental and elaborate, but it is not his own and it is the emblem of secession and rebellion.

"The study of Holy Scripture," says Dr. Tracy, "has vindicated for itself a foremost place among the intellectual activities of our day. For students of Christianity of course the Bible always has had its importance. But now no student of history or language or many other branches of human learning may overlook or neglect it. And from no single source has so much information of superlative value to the general scholar been gleaned." In the words of Pope Pius VI, "the Sacred Scriptures are the most abundant source left open to everyone to draw from them purity of morals and doctrine and to eradicate the errors so widely disseminated in these corrupt times."

The illustrious Pope Leo XIII in his beautiful letter on the study of the Sacred Scriptures says: "'All Scripture inspired of God is profitable to teach, to reprove, to correct, to instruct in justice that the man of God may be perfect, furnished to every good work' (2 Tim. iii, 16). That such was the purpose of God in giving the Scriptures to men is shown by the example of Christ our Lord and of His apostles. He who obtained authority by miracles, merited belief by authority, and by belief drew to Himself the multitude, was accustomed in the exercise of His divine mission to appeal to the Scriptures. He uses them at times to prove that He was sent by God and that

He is God. From them He draws arguments for the instruction of His disciples and the confirmation of His doctrine. He vindicates them from the calumnies of objectors. He quotes them against Sadducees and Pharisees. He retorts from them upon Satan himself when he impudently dares to tempt Him. At the close of His life His utterances are from Holy Scripture. It is the Scriptures which He expounds to His disciples after the resurrection and during all the time till He ascends to the glory of His Father. The discourses of the Apostles were almost entirely woven from sayings of the Old Testament which made in the strongest manner for the New Dispensation.

“St. Jerome has rightly said: ‘Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.’ In its pages His image stands out, as it were, alive and breathing; diffusing everywhere consolation in trouble, encouragement to virtue, and attraction to the love of God. As regards the Church, her institution, her nature, her functions and her gifts we find in Holy Scripture so many references and so many ready and convincing arguments, that as St. Jerome again most truly says: ‘A man who is thoroughly grounded in the testimonies of the Scriptures is a bulwark of the Church.’ If we come to moral formation and to discipline an apostolic man finds in the Sacred Scriptures abun-

dant and most excellent aid, precepts full of holiness, exhortations framed with sweetness and force, shining examples of every kind of virtue, and finally the promise of eternal reward and the threat of everlasting punishment uttered in weightiest terms in God's name and in God's own words. . . .

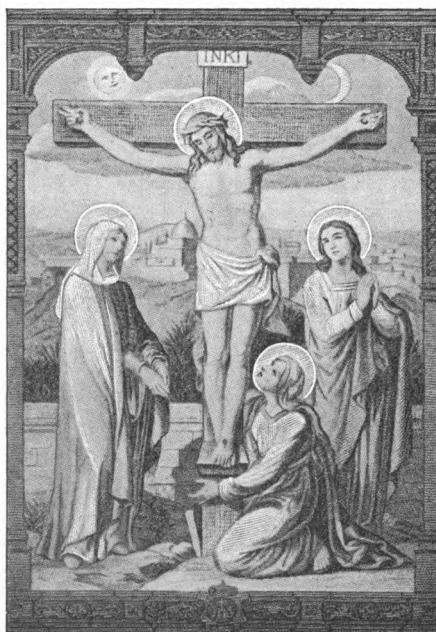
"The Holy Fathers never cease to extol the Sacred Scripture and its fruits. In innumerable passages of their writings we find them applying to it such phrases as: 'an inexhaustible treasury of heavenly doctrine' or 'an everlasting fountain of salvation' or as 'fertile pastures and most lovely gardens in which the flock of the Lord is marvelously refreshed and delighted.'"

Among the many interesting letters which St. Jerome has left, there is one to Laeta, a noble lady of Rome, regarding the education of her daughter, Paula. An aunt of the child was at the time in Bethlehem, where amid those sacred scenes she studied the Holy Scriptures in the Hebrew and Greek tongues, as was then the custom of educated Christian ladies. St. Jerome would have the child Paula trained in all the arts and sciences that could refine her mind and lead it to its highest exercise in that singularly gifted nature. To this end he bids Laeta cultivate in the child an early knowledge of the Sacred Scripture. With a touching simplicity the aged saint enters

into minute details of the daily training—how the childish hands are to form the ivory letters, which serve her as playthings, into the names of the prophets and saints of the Old Testament; how later she is to commit to memory, each day, choice sayings, flowers of wisdom culled from the sacred writers; and how finally she is to come to the Holy Land and learn from her aunt the lofty erudition and understanding of the Bible, a book which contains and unfolds to him who knows how to read it rightly, all the wisdom of ages in principle and in practice.—Heuser.

“Within the awful volume lies
The mystery of mysteries;
Happiest they of human race
To whom God has granted grace
To read, to fear, to hope, to pray,
To lift the latch and force the way;
And better had they ne’er been born
Who read to doubt or read to scorn.”

—“The Monastery.” S. W. S.




THE CRUCIFICTION.

CHAPTER V

THE STUDY OF THE CRUCIFIX

"In the cross of Christ I glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time,
All the light of Sacred Story
Gathers round its head sublime."

NE day St. Bonaventure went to visit St. Thomas and with all the affectionate frankness and humility of a friend, said to him: "My brother, where did you get the beautiful things which all so admire in your works?" "There is my book," said St. Thomas, pointing to the Crucifix. The answer was not lost on St. Bonaventure. How skilled he was in the reading of this great book, and what lessons he drew from it for the admiration and edification of the faithful is well known. Its language and sense are not within the reach of all. Only a few privileged souls can grasp its depth of meaning. In the silence of the night Pythagoras contemplated with admiration the harmony of the celestial spheres. Galenus read in the fibres of the human body a

magnificent hymn to the glory of the Creator. Every Christian who has studied ever so little in the school of St. Paul can read the Crucifix and find there hope, consolation and love.

But there are few who can read all its pages, few who can measure the height and the depth of the mystery of a God dying on a cross, a mystery which St. Paul calls: "the power and wisdom of God" (Cor. i, 24). So marvellous did it seem that St. Peter Chrysologus cried out: "This is the mystery that amazed and frightened the saints." The friends of the suffering Job were so bewildered at the greatness of his afflictions and the extent of his patience and resignation that they remained for days without speaking a word.

But what is Job compared with Jesus hanging on the cross! The cross is the great tribune, the great pulpit from which the Divine Master teaches His disciples. It is the book in which His teachings are gathered together and in which He bids us read.

In the Old Law before the coming of the Redeemer, Christ was the rule and pattern of the just, but it was somewhat difficult to make out His figure. The outlines were but dimly traced, and it required close attention and careful study to follow in His path and not go astray. But from the day when divine wisdom spoke not by the mouth of prophets, but in His own person; in

other words, when our Lord came to us in mortal flesh and taught us by word and example, His path has been so clearly marked out that it is impossible to mistake it or go astray. All His ways and all His footsteps lead up to Calvary and His cross. And when I am at the foot of the cross I have only to open my eyes to learn without labor what is necessary to know to save my soul. Now what does our Lord teach me from the cross?

He teaches me who God is. When I contemplate the Crucifix I am forced to cry out: O how great is God! How great is that God who by a word creates a world out of nothing; who suspends the sun in the vault of the heavens; who scatters stars in the firmament as the wind scatters dust on the plain; who is borne on the wings of the wind, and with a look shakes the columns of heaven, making the earth to tremble. Such is the God of the Old Law—the God of the prophets. But a God who cannot be worthily honored save by a God-man, a God whose outraged majesty can be duly repaired only by the sacrifice and immolation of a God equal in nature and perfect as Himself—such is the God of the Christians.

I again contemplate the cross and cry out: O how holy is God! How shocking is sin in His sight! How sternly, how inflexibly will He pursue it!

Set aside the consideration of the sin of the

angels, and its everlasting punishment. Even this can give us no adequate idea of the malice of sin or the greatness of its chastisement. The deluge wrought havoc with God's beautiful creation, and yet it gives only a faint idea of the enormity of sin. And so with hell and its devouring flames that will torture the reprobate as long as God is God. But what a terrifying idea of sin I get from the cross of Christ! If God dealt so sternly with His own Blessed Son because He offered Himself a surety for sinners, how inexorably will His justice deal with sinners who abuse the price of their Redemption.

Once more I contemplate the cross and cry out: "How good is God, how rich in mercy!" Everything about me speaks to me of God's goodness. I look upon the vault of heaven and out upon the world, and on everything I find the words written: "These are the gifts and blessings of God." But the language of the heavens and the earth is not so full of meaning as is the sight of the Crucified. When I gaze upon that kingly brow crowned with thorns, upon that sacred face so bruised and bleeding, upon that divine body furrowed with wounds, then I begin to bring home to myself and realize the excess of the love of my Savior and my God. "For God so loved the world." From out those many wounds comes a voice clear and distinct, a voice throbbing

with love, saying: "Son give me Thy heart" (Pv. xxiii, 26).

What does our Lord teach from the cross? He teaches me how great is the price of my soul. At the foot of the cross I can put a high value on myself without fear of sinning against humility. Of myself I am nothing; I have nothing but sin. But I have been purchased at a great price; my soul has been crimsoned with the blood of a God. In the order of grace it is of inestimable value. God forbid that it should ever through human respect become the slave of the world or the slave of the devil. A slight mortification frightens me, the least trial or sacrifice disturbs and upsets me. I look up at the cross and then down into my soul, and I am ashamed of my cowardice.

From the study of the cross a priest learns to know the value of a soul. In the year 1793 a priest of Besancon gathered about him in the shelter of the forest a few Christians who wished to serve God, secure from persecution. The worthy shepherd, however, did not limit his labors to this little flock, he frequently went forth in search of other souls. One day word was brought to him that the mother of one of his exiled brother-priests was dangerously ill. He immediately set out to visit her. His appearance frightened a good old servant of the family, who met him. "My dear Father," she said, "what do

you mean? You are going to certain death." This seemed true, because the lady whom he had come to see had a son who was a violent revolutionist and who never quitted the bedside of his sick mother, in the hope, no doubt of seizing any priest who might come to attend her. "It matters not," replied the priest to the servant, "The soul of this woman is more valuable than my life." So saying he entered the room and went straight to the son who was sitting by his mother's side. "Sir," said he, "kindly leave me alone for a half hour with your good mother and then I shall deliver myself into your hands." The son was stupefied; for an instant he stood motionless, then throwing himself into the arms of the apostolic man he said: "I never had a conception of such sacrifice. Let my mother have the benefit of the blessing which God has sent her." His mother received the grace of the Sacraments and the priest departed unmolested. His was the courage of a hero—he knew the worth of a soul purchased by the blood of Christ.—Millet-Byrne.

We shall not likely have the occasion or the good fortune like the Apostles and early Christians to shed our blood and be martyrs for the faith. But we can and should be martyrs in spirit. This martyrdom is of longer duration and even more painful than the martyrdom of blood. Our Lord suffered this martyrdom of the soul, not

for three hours only, but for three and thirty years. Truly the cross of Christ is a great school, and St. Paul wished for no other teacher than Christ Crucified.

We have all seen instances of self-sacrifice and we feel convinced that they are most certain evidences of genuine love. We know what a mother will do for her child, how she will toil and moil and suffer, yes, even die for the well-being of her offspring. We know what a friend will do for a friend. St. Vincent de Paul served as a galley slave to liberate the young man condemned. We know what a faithful slave will do for the master whom he loves. History tells us of a slave who threw himself into the midst of wolves to give his master time to escape, and a monument was erected on the spot to commemorate that self-sacrificing love. We know when the dark and gloomy clouds of war hang over a battle-field, there is still a gleam of sunshine—a silver lining to those clouds—the devoted work of chaplains and nurses. While they tend to the wounded and dying, and staunch the life-blood as it ebbs away, they are directing the mind of the sufferer to another and better world.

All this we admire and praise and love to think about. It shows there is something noble and generous still left in our poor fallen nature. And yet this is but the love of man for man, and in it

there is always some hope of reward, if not the gratitude and love of our fellow-beings, at least a reward in the world to come. But when we look at the cross of Christ we see a picture of love before which all else pales into insignificance. For we have here not man sacrificing himself for man, but a God dying for those who should pay the penalty in His stead. It is greater than the love of a mother for her child—"Can a mother forget her infant so as not to have pity on the son of her womb, and if she should forget yet not will I forget thee" (Isaias xlix, 15). It is more than the love of friend for friend, for when we were in sin we were at enmity with God. It is not the love of a faithful slave for a generous master, but the love of a kind Master for His rebellious slaves, and the cross of Christ is a monument of love that never had its equal in the history of the world.

They tell of a certain judge who sat in the tribunal of justice. The culprit that stood before him had been a friend of his boyhood days. The case was tried and the accused found guilty. But everyone thought that the judge would reject the evidence and set his friend at liberty. To their great surprise he did not. He imposed a fine in accordance with the law. When the judge had pronounced the sentence, he stepped down from his seat of justice and standing on the level with

his former friend, with his own money paid the fine he had imposed. And thus he mingled mercy and justice.

The justice of God had imposed a terrible penalty, and what mortal man could ever have paid it! That same God came down from His throne of justice and making Himself like unto us in all things, save sin, paid the penalty He imposed, and thus as the Royal Psalmist says: "Justice and mercy have kissed" (Ps. lxxxiv, 11). "Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not; a body Thou hast prepared for me" (Heb. x, 5). "It is written in the head of the book; behold I come" (Ps. xxxix). "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us" (Jn. i, 14). But three and thirty years separated the crib from the cross, and when hanging on this gibbet of infamy He could well say: "I have loved you with an everlasting love" (Jn. xxxi, 3). "If you believe not my words, believe my works" (Jn. x, 38). "They have dug my hands and feet, they have numbered all my bones" (Ps. xxi, 17).

Tradition has it that when St. Peter was fleeing from persecution in Rome, he met our Lord carrying His cross. "Domine quo vadis?" Peter asked, "Lord, whither goest Thou?" "I am going to Rome to be crucified again," he replied. St. Peter, ashamed of his cowardice, returned, and ended his life on the cross as his Master had done.

Saul on his way to Damascus was transformed into Paul, the vessel of election. The secrets of heaven were revealed to him and he was chosen to be the Apostle of the Gentiles. But listen to what Christ says: "I will show him what great things he must suffer for my sake" (2 Cor. vi, 8).


In a little village of Normandy there lived a poor woman known as La Gerbaude. She had been a cripple since her birth, and the villagers spoke of her as a marvel of cheerful patience. "I went to visit her," says the writer, "and found a little, shrunk creature lying all cramped up on a chair." One hand was tied up in rags saturated with blood. Her head was drawn down so that her chin seemed pinned to her breast. "Good morning, my good woman," said the visitor. "Good morning and welcome," she replied. "And how do you manage to live here, good woman!" "Oh, the kind neighbors bring me a little food, now and then, God bless them!" "But you must suffer very much?" "Well, yes, but not as much as my Savior did," and she struggled to look at the cross on the wall—the only ornament in the cheerless room. "And they never hear you complain," said the visitor. "Ah me! why should I," she replied. "I think I am buying heaven very cheap and every time I look at my Lord He seems to say what he said to the penitent thief: You will be with me in Paradise. And then I have

so much time to pray. 'And I pray and I suffer for those in the world who forget to pray for themselves. If I were well and able to be about perhaps I, too, would forget my God. And my good priest tells me that God will reward me above, for our present tribulations are momentary and light, but they work for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory" (2 Cor. iv, 17). And thus she had learned her lesson well.

Would we obtain some great favor from God, we must buy it with the coin of sacrifice. Would we avert some terrible disaster, we must pay with the coin of sacrifice. Would we win blessings and graces for ourselves and those entrusted to our care, again and always the answer is the same: "Pay in the coin of sacrifice stamped with the royal insignia of the cross. The road of suffering is the path that leads to glory. The resurrection of Christ came after His terrible suffering, and if we suffer with Him we shall also reign."

CHAPTER VI

TRUE DEVOTION

T scarcely needs much argument to prove that true, sincere imitation of our Blessed Lord supposes true piety or devotion. Devotion is indispensable for success in any cause; much more so then, in the labor of copying our divine model.

What is true devotion? The word devotion is from the Latin *devotio*, and the root of *devotio* is *votum* which means a vow. To have true devotion therefore means to be devoted or in a sense, vowed to God. Let us take a few illustrations. You watch a good child, for example. You see it do what the parents command, and avoid what they forbid. But this is not all. It will even anticipate their desires. You say: this is a devoted child. Or consider a servant. He takes interest in his master's affairs, he regards them as if they were his own, he never loses a moment's time. You say he is a devoted servant. A soldier takes up arms in defence of his country, and is

ready to die in her honor. You say he is devoted to his country's cause. Or finally consider a person intent on getting a promotion in some sphere of life. He gives himself no rest day or night. Such a person you say is wholly devoted to ambition.

Now devotion to God comprehends all this in a most eminent degree. It is zeal in His service. It seeks His glory everywhere and in everything. It impels one to do what God commands, and to avoid what God forbids, and even to go in advance of His expressed desire. In what does true devotion consist? Some people have strange notions about this. One will make it consist in certain external practices of piety and regard these as the very essence of devotion. Those who are given to fasting sometimes imagine they are bubbling over with devotion when they have fasted more than usual, no matter how many faults they may commit against charity or justice. Again we meet people in the world who open their purse readily and give generously, but violate the laws of abstinence and neglect most important duties. I have known people to pay their pew rent and never go to Mass. We see others much given to vocal prayer. They will spend hours praying, and neglect their household duties. And so on, one in this way, another in that, each according to his own whim or fancy. But let us not be under a

delusion. Devotion or true piety is not like the Bible in the hands of our separated brethren—a subject of private interpretation. No, it is what God has made it and nothing more nor less. True devotion consists in an entire self-oblation to the good pleasure of God; that is to say, it consists in a generous, prompt and constant will to do all that God asks of us in whatever place or condition we may happen to be. It consists in the observance of the commandments of God and the Church and the fulfilment of the duties of our state of life, not in a half-hearted, careless, listless way, but in a manner that gives evidence of the interest we take in our work and shows even an amount of enthusiasm. Anything different from that is a false and pharisaic devotion condemned by the Master Himself. It is an illusion to think we can fulfil some points of the law and trample others under foot. For example, to kiss a crucifix with a great show of devotion and at the same time to harbor hate and revenge against another; to be almost rapt in ecstasy in prayer and when asked to do one a favor: “O, go do it yourself;” to say a dozen kinds of rosaries and then begin a litany of tongue-lashing.

The law of God is one and the same. God has made all its parts. We are the subjects, not the judges of the law. For a single fault Moses was

excluded from the promised land. For a single lie Ananias and Sapphira were punished with death.

St. Isidore was a poor boy who had to work for a living. His master permitted him to go to Mass every day, provided he could finish his work. The saintly youth rose earlier than usual, did his work and then went to Mass, giving an example of how the practice of true piety and devotion may be reconciled with the performance of duty. St. Clotilda devoted much time to exercises of piety amid the distractions of court life. Yet she regulated her time and her conduct so well that she could watch over the work of the servants and everything that was going on, and at the same time bring about the conversion of her husband King Clovis.

St. Francis made use of different comparisons to show the degrees of devotion. "If you take notice of ostriches," he says, "you will see that they have wings and yet they never fly. They merely make use of them to move along quickly. Hens have wings, but use them very seldom. The eagle, however, and similar birds are nearly always on the wing. So it is with Christians. Some walk, that is they do what is strictly required of them and nothing else. They are like the ostriches. Others do a little more. Now and then they make a little spurt and run along some distance on

the road of sanctity, at a mission, for instance, or retreat. They are like the hen that uses her wings to fly occasionally. And finally there are certain generous souls who, we may say, fly along the path of perfection incessantly. They direct their course towards heaven and cover the distance with great rapidity. They generously fulfil all their duties, cost what it may. They resemble the eagle who constantly hovers in higher regions and seems to despise the earth." To take another comparison from St. Francis. "Devotion is to sanctifying grace what the flame is to the fire, what cream is to milk, what the flower is to the stem." Devotion is, therefore, the same as piety, fervor, love of God. "It is the love of God reduced to practice," says Grou. Let us now see what characteristics it must have to be pleasing to God.

True devotion should be interior, supernatural, sovereign and universal. It should be interior, that is, in the heart. There the little seed of devotion must take root and gradually develop. If the seat of devotion is not the heart, then it is superficial, deceptive and hypocritical. It resembles a tree without roots, a stem without pith, a body without a soul, an edifice without a foundation. God condemns it and calls those who practise it "whitened sepulchres," bright and beautiful without, but full of foulness and infection within. Suppose you chop off the branches of an

apple tree and plant them side by side. Will you have an orchard? You say, no. Why not? Because what is most necessary is not there, the root. So with a piety that has nothing but the external. It is only a mask of devotion. With it one may appear to be pious and not be so, outwardly modest, but dissolute within.

True devotion must be supernatural. Now it is supernatural in two ways, with regard to its origin and with regard to its motives. As to its origin, it must come from God as its source; hence the need of asking it with humility and confidence. As to its motives, true piety is supernatural when practised in view of God and with the intention of pleasing Him, and not from self-love, ostentation, pleasure, or inclination.

Devotion is sovereign when it triumphs over everything that is opposed to a truly Christian life, such as weariness, disgust, laziness and human respect. It must be such as to encourage us to do not only what is easy and agreeable, but also what requires a greater effort and more generosity of spirit. It must form in us the disposition to sacrifice everything rather than displease God, and enable us to triumph over the most violent temptations. As long as we refuse to make some little sacrifice, which in our heart we feel to be necessary, our devotion is not sovereign. Abraham, the Father of the chosen people, did

not hesitate a moment when God told him to sacrifice his only son, the joy of his heart and the hope of his posterity. But God was satisfied with his devotedness. When the boy was bound on the altar of sacrifice an angel stayed the uplifted hand and bade Abraham offer a lamb instead. David, the Royal Psalmist, displayed his devotion by protesting to the Lord that his heart was ready to do and suffer all that God might require. "My heart is ready, O Lord, my heart is ready." And God spoke of David as a man according to His own heart.

And finally, devotion, to be genuine, must be universal. In other words it must extend to everything that falls under the will of God, our duties toward God, our neighbor and ourselves. Otherwise it would resemble the devotion of the Pharisees which went even to scrupulosity in the observance of some points of the law while others they despised and trampled under foot. To incur God's displeasure it is not necessary to transgress the whole law. It is enough if we violate it in one essential point. This is the doctrine taught by St. James. There is no one who does not perform some good, and what they do may be sufficient in the eyes of men, but not in the eyes of God. A crack in a vase may render it unfit for use though the whole vase is not broken. A soldier may be killed in battle, but his body need not be riddled

with bullets. One tiny bullet may do the fatal work. The Immaculate Mother of God was a model of perfect devotion. She was careful to observe the law even when she might easily be dispensed. It was her joy to anticipate the will and good pleasure of her God. She followed in the blood-stained footsteps of her suffering Son and was true to Him to the last, mingling her tears with His sacred blood to form a precious bath for the sin-stained souls of men.

CHAPTER VII

WHAT SCRIPTURE SAYS OF FAITH

"Through the dark and stormy night
Faith beholds a feeble light
Up the blackness streaking;
Knowing God's own time is best
In a patient hope I rest
For the full day-breaking."

FAITH is a gift of God and "like every best and perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights," (James i, 17). "We should continually thank God," says St. Alphonsus, "for the precious gift of faith that has made us children of Holy Church. Moreover," continues the saint, "we should submit our reason to the truths of faith with the humility and simplicity of a child." Let us turn to the pages of Holy Writ and glean a thought from the inspired writers.

In the eleventh chapter of his epistle to the Hebrews, St. Paul says: "Faith is the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that appear not." Now these last words appear

to be a contradiction, "the evidence of things that appear not;" as if I should say: "the sight of things that you cannot see." But there is no contradiction here whatever. It is true we cannot see with our eyes or comprehend with our mind the great truths of eternity. We know them by revelation, yet by faith we are more certain of their existence than if we actually saw them with our eyes and understood them with our reason. If we may be allowed a comparison, faith is to reason what a telescope is to the naked eye. No doubt you have looked through a telescope or field glass. By means of the powerful lens we can see many things hidden from the naked eye. Now suppose a man refused to use a field glass and because he couldn't see an object in the distance, declared positively and obstinately that there was no object there. You would be tempted to say: "there are none so blind as those who will not see;" he could see if he only consented to make use of the means. Just so with the man who tries to look at things in the supernatural order with the feeble and short-sighted eye of reason. He doesn't see them; he doesn't understand them, therefore he says: they do not exist. Did he but consent to use the powerful lens of faith he would be astonished at the clearness of vision. This is what is meant by "the evidence of things not seen." God can neither deceive nor be de-

ceived. If therefore He tells me something, I am more certain of it than if I could see it with my eyes or understand it with my reason, for both my eyes and my reason may be deceived. Again, there are certain truths and mysteries which the human mind cannot comprehend and whose very existence could not and would not be known unless we had God's word for it. They are like the stars we cannot see, but we take the astronomer's word for it that they exist. Such are, for example, the mystery of the Blessed Trinity and the mystery of the Blessed Eucharist.

Again, Holy Scripture tells us that all the merit of faith arises from the fact that we believe on the authority of God's word alone what we neither see nor understand. We all know that faith is a virtue very dear to God and richly rewarded by Him. "God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish but have life everlasting" (John iii, 16). "If thou canst have faith all things are possible to them that believe (Mark ix, 22). "Go in peace, thy faith hath healed thee" (Mark v, 34). Now the reason that faith gives such pleasure to God is this—we place implicit confidence in what He says, never doubting for a moment that it is true, simply because He says so, though we do not see nor understand it. When the other Apostles told St. Thomas that

the Lord had risen from the dead, the doubting Thomas said: "I will not believe it till I see Him and the imprint of the nails in His hands and feet." Our Lord appeared and showed them to Him. Then he believed, but what did our Lord say: "Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen and have believed" (John xx, 29).

Finally we learn from Sacred Scripture that faith is a gift of God that we can never attain by our natural strength alone without the assistance of divine grace. This we are given to understand by our Savior's own words: "No man can come to me except the Father who hath sent me draw him." (John vi, 44), and again: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar Jona, because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father who is in heaven" (Mt. xvi, 17). St. Paul says: "By grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, for it is the gift of God" (Eph. ii, 8). But you may say: "Why do we need the grace of God to believe? Why must faith be a gift of God?" The reason is this: whatever comes within the sphere of our understanding, whatever appeals to our reason and forces it to the logical conclusion that "such and such a thing is quite intelligible; quite reasonable, in fact must be so," we have no difficulty in accepting; indeed, it is the natural operation of the intellect, just as

natural as breathing is for the lungs. But when something is proposed that lies beyond the sphere of reason, as do supernatural truths, then reason is apt to rebel and say: "I don't see this, I don't understand it; therefore I reject it." And right here God's grace is necessary to influence the will, which in turn says to the reason: If you don't understand this, at least take it on the authority of one who does, and cannot deceive you. You take other things for granted. You admit the facts of history which you have never seen; you believe the deductions of science which you have not proved, perhaps cannot even investigate, but simply and solely on the dictum of some human being whom you consider an authority in the matter; it were unreasonable therefore to refuse assent to an authority that is not human but divine.

And this will explain to you what perhaps has always seemed strange. There have been great and learned men in the world, and they have lived and died without the true faith. Certainly you say they must have known better—it could hardly have been ignorance. Well, to tell the truth, it sometimes is ignorance, but with them a culpable ignorance. You will find people that are educated, accomplished, and even renowned in the world of science, but in religion they do not know their A, B, C. But not to speak of this class, there are those who study religion and investigate

the teachings of the true Church and yet do not believe. The great German scientist, Count Stolberg, investigated the claims of the Catholic Church, and as he himself said: "I understood the teachings of the Church better perhaps than many Catholics, but I could not believe until I went down on my knees and asked God for the grace to do so."

If I am right Thy grace impart
Still in the right to stay;
If I am wrong then guide my heart
To find the better way.

He found the better way. He entered the Catholic Church, and when the Emperor summoned him to his presence and said: "I despise a man that goes back on the religion of his forefathers," the Count replied: "Sire, I share your sentiments in this regard. If my forefathers had not gone back on their religion they would not have put me to the trouble of returning to it now."

Yes, he found the better way, and in the joy and gratitude of his heart his sentiments were like those of the illustrious St. Augustine, one of the greatest minds that ever lived: "Too late have I known Thee, O beauty ever ancient and ever new."

The distinguished Cardinal Newman, one of the lights of the last century, was an earnest and sincere Anglican clergyman. But after all his

study and careful investigation he had to kneel down humbly and say:

"Lead, Kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,
Lead Thou me on,
The night is dark and I am far from home,
Lead Thou me on;
Keep Thou my feet, I do not ask to see
The distant scene; one step enough for me."

All this proves to us that faith is a gift of God for which we can never be grateful enough. Our gratitude must be shown by a love and appreciation of our faith, and this will induce us often to say: "I believe, Lord, help Thou my unbelief; I believe all that Thy Holy Church believes and teaches, because Thou hast revealed it who canst neither deceive nor be deceived." It ought to be the ambition of every Catholic to convert and bring to the light of the true faith at least one person during a life time, and when you find it difficult to submit your reason to the teachings of holy faith, remember this: "God has said it; I trust God's word; I will be loyal to God and His Holy Church."


One dark night a pilot lost his bearings on the ocean. Suddenly he saw the gleaming rays from a lighthouse on a distant coast. He knew the channel and steered his vessel in that direction. He reached the harbor in safety and rested securely waiting for the sun to rise above the hori-

zon, when he could gaze at leisure on the beauty of the landscape.

Faith is not a luminous vision ; it is not like the sun at noon day. It is, however, a beacon light—a torch spreading its rays through the encompassing darkness. It banishes doubt and is a stay to our feeble reason, which it strengthens with the foundation of God's word. Truth is yonder ; you are in port ; be tranquil. You do not yet comprehend, but you will by and by. Darkness is dissolving into dawn, and when the clouds are lifted and the gates of eternal bliss swing open at your approach, the light of faith will be obscured forever in the brilliance of the vision of God.

CHAPTER VIII

SUPERSTITION

HE prophets of the Old Law foretold the coming of the Redeemer of man. In their prophetic writings they portrayed Him as He would appear on earth. In the fullness of time the Savior came, and St. John the Baptist, pointing to Him, said: "Behold the Lamb of God, who cometh to take away the sins of the world." The Evangelists tell us that Christ Jesus came "to enlighten them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death." "I am the light of the world" (John viii, 12), said Christ Himself. Before the coming of Christ the world was buried in darkness. For the most part it was covered with a sable pall of ignorance and sin, and the prince of sin held undisputed sway. Idolatry and superstition were the fetters forged in hell to bind the minds of men and to prevent them from enjoying the liberty of the children of God.

Let us turn our attention to the second of these two evils.

Superstition is a species of idolatry. It consists in turning away from the true God and seeking help from the devil. Divine Providence has ordained two ways or means of helping us in our needs, the one natural, the other supernatural. For example, Providence has provided us with medicine to restore health, food to sustain life. God has endowed us with reason to examine and discover the truth, and with free will to do what right reason dictates. These are natural means. Supernatural means are the sacraments, prayers, blessings, fasting and alms, relics of saints, etc., to obtain from God's goodness and mercy favors both for soul and body.

Now, when we use means that are neither natural nor supernatural, are not appointed by God nor authorized by His Church, and moreover have no connection whatever with the end sought after, we are guilty of superstition.

Why do people make use of superstitious means? For different reasons. Some led by curiosity or views of self-interest wish to know hidden things, to discover lost goods, to find concealed treasures. Others wish to know what is going to happen to themselves, their enemies or their friends. Still others wish to bring evil on those whom they dislike or arouse a sinful affec-

tion towards themselves. The most sinful of all superstitious practices is direct communication with the evil spirit—making a compact with Satan. This was a practice of more frequent occurrence in pagan days, but there are instances recorded even in Christian times. We read in the “Glories of Mary” of a young man who had squandered his fortune and found himself pressed by want. A wicked magician prevailed upon him to give himself to the devil and he would soon get rich. The devil appeared and said: “I have certain conditions to make. You must renounce the worship of Jesus Christ.” This he consented to do. “Again,” said Satan, “you must renounce the love of Mary, the Mother of God.” Now the young man had loved the Blessed Mother, and the thought of turning his back on her grieved him to the heart. In the agony of his soul he cried out: “O Mary, my Mother, what have I done!” At once the devil disappeared, and the young man wept tears of repentance for his sin.

Of late years a great deal of interest has been aroused by certain devices for knowing future or hidden events; such are, for instance, the planchette or automatic writing and the ouija board. Now opinions may differ in regard to the use of these things. Some people will tell you that it is altogether within the sphere of the natural, and

that the mind impressions are conveyed through the nervous system. But, setting this aside for the moment, suppose that the information sought is not obtainable by natural means, then it must be supplied either by the supernatural help of God or the preternatural help of Satan.

But it is idle to suppose that God is going to stand at the beck of every such curiosity-seeker, and, therefore, the conclusion is that such a one is virtually invoking the aid of the devil. And it requires no stretch of reason to understand that Satan would very gladly make use of these things to further his wicked designs.

Table turning for the purpose of obtaining a manifestly preternatural result, i.e., to find out what cannot possibly be known to any of those taking part, is a grievous sin. Spiritualism or consulting spirits through the intervention of a third person, commonly called a medium, is positively forbidden and grievously sinful. For in the case of real spiritualism (I do not speak of stage illusions by which an audience is deceived by sleight of hand, mirrors, wires or other means) the spirits can be none other than demons. They, therefore, who assist at spiritualistic meetings or seances are guilty of sin.

In general, with regard to these occult arts, including hypnotism, practised without the required precautions, there is always more or less

danger and harm to those who dabble in them, harm to the body and the soul. The nervous system is broken down and the will is weakened, and this is a serious drawback to virtuous living. A morbid, dreamy, introspective and unhealthy condition of mind is fostered, and as a result prayer, devotion, the earnest practice of religion and application to serious duty become almost impossible.

Next in malice to a direct communication with Satan is to consult those who are generally known or supposed to have their knowledge from the devil, and these are called in the Scriptures witches, wizards, sorcerers, magicians, soothsayers, fortune-tellers, charmers and enchanters. We read in the acts of the Apostles, of Simon Magus, who envied the Apostles because by their miracles they won the people to the faith of Christ. Simon tried to bewitch the people by his magical practices, but he came to grief. St. Paul warns the Christians against such practices when he says that "those who do such things shall not obtain the kingdom of God." St. John tells us that "they shall have their portion in the pool burning with fire and brimstone" (Apoc. ii, 8).

To use superstitious means to bring harm or misfortune on others is very sinful—and, besides the superstition there is also a sin against charity and justice. To observe dreams is another source

of superstition. But you will tell me: dreams sometimes come from God; for example, the dreams mentioned in Holy Scripture. St. Joseph was told in a dream to rise and take the child and His Mother and flee into Egypt. It is true God does sometimes communicate His will by means of dreams, but then always to some great saint or public personage, and for the public good. Moreover, God never leaves them in doubt as to the origin of their dreams. But apart from this it is wrong to pay attention to dreams, and the more attention you pay to them the more diseased your imagination will grow and the more annoyance you will suffer, for Satan likes "to fish in troubled waters."

And, finally, there are a great many relics of the superstition of pagan antiquity that have come down to us across the centuries, and it is quite probable that they will be passed along from generation to generation as long as the devil can keep the ball of mischief a-rolling. Here are some of them:

a. To observe one's horoscope, to see under what star you were born, lucky or unlucky. b. Reading cups and tea leaves; cutting cards. c. Observing lucky and unlucky days, viz., Friday, the 13th. d. To use charms, to carry certain things about one's person or to pronounce certain words. e. To say certain prayers a certain number of times,

in certain postures and expect a certain result. (Endless chain prayer.) f. To wonder what's going to happen if the looking glass falls and breaks; if the salt upsets; if the knife crosses the fork; if thirteen happen to be at table. g. To meet an old woman the first thing on New Year's day; to put the shoe on the left foot first; to see a rabbit cross your path. All this they say means bad luck. It is nonsense and superstition.


Our duty as loyal Catholics is to adhere closely to the teaching of our holy faith, and we shall never go astray. Our Divine Saviour who "enlighteneth every man who cometh into this world" is ever with His Holy Church, her inspiration and her guide. Follow her and listen to her voice, as the child follows and listens to its mother. If God has chosen to hide the future from our view, He has good reasons for doing so; let us not by unlawful means seek to tear aside the veil. A good and devoted Catholic, says St. Francis de Sales, will act towards God as a child in company with its father. With charming naivete he says: "Do as little children do; with one hand they hold their father while with the other they gather berries from the hedge. In like manner, while tending to the affairs of this world with one hand, with the other always keep hold of your Heavenly Father, turning to Him from time to time to see if He is pleased with what you are doing." If

we deal confidently with God today, we need have no misgiving about tomorrow, for God is able and willing to help us tomorrow, as He was able and willing to help us today.

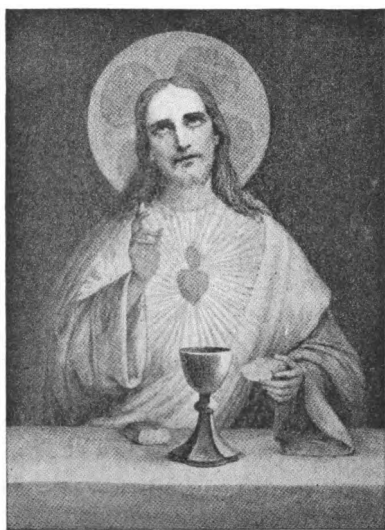
CHAPTER IX

THE EUCHARISTIC LIFE OF CHRIST

"Behold, I am with you all days even to the consummation of the world" (Mt. xxviii, 20).

 CERTAIN man was once thrown into prison. While there he suffered much from hunger, cold and thirst. One day the king determined to find out how he bore his sufferings. Having put off his royal apparel, he went in disguise to the prison and asked the poor man how he fared, but this prisoner scarcely deigned to answer him. When the king had gone away, the keeper of the jail said to the criminal: "Do you know who was speaking to you? It was the king himself." "The king!" exclaimed the prisoner. "O wretch that I am! If I had known that, I would have thrown myself at his feet and craved for pardon and for liberty, but now it is too late."

The application, dear reader, is evident. Our true home is heaven, and as long as we are on



EUCCHARISTIC HEART OF JESUS.

earth we are exiles and captives. Crosses and trials are our daily bread. The great King of Heaven has deigned to visit His exiled people. He came disguised as a man. "He came to His own and His own received Him not" (Jn. i, 11). He determined to remain with His people to comfort and strengthen them in their exile, but He remains disguised under the appearance of bread. Many refuse to acknowledge Him and treat Him as a stranger in a foreign land. "Behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" (Mt. xviii, 20). Let us reflect for a moment on the eucharistic life of our Lord.

"All great men," says Millet, "who have rendered eminent services to mankind, legislators who by wise laws have civilized and refined peoples, conquerors who by their victories have extended the bounds of their empires, have one and all desired that their names should not perish from the fickle memory of men, and that some witness to their beneficence should be handed down from generation to generation. To make sure of this, what did they do? They selected some prominent and conspicuous spot, and there they set up monuments of bronze or stone or other imperishable material in hope that these would defy the obliterating influence of time and carry down to posterity the story of their deeds and the fame of

their triumphs. Such are the trophies and triumphal arches, the columns and statues, the pyramids and obelisks set up by Egyptian, Greek and Roman."

In like manner our Savior Jesus Christ, the Immortal Legislator, the Divine Conqueror, having overcome hell and saved the world by the cross; having founded a Church in which He left a code of laws of incomparable perfection, wished also to perpetuate the memory of such wonderful prodigies and to set up in some place that might be seen by all the world a trophy which should commemorate His victories and be for all times a perpetual witness to His beneficence and goodness and an appeal to the love and gratitude of men. This trophy is the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar. His own command to His disciples was: "Do this in commemoration of me." A thousand years before the Royal Prophet David had foretold that the Redeemer would leave this great monument as a witness to His love. "He hath made a remembrance of His wonderful works, being a merciful and a gracious Lord. He hath given food to them that fear Him" (Ps. cx, 4).

Now this trophy is set up in a place which is public and visible to all the world; that is, in our churches which are ever open, and upon our altars which are elevated that they may be seen by all.

Again, the trophies, statues and monuments of

the ancients were not alone witnesses to the great and heroic deeds which they commemorated. They were also asylums and places of refuge where slaves and criminals fleeing from justice might find safety and be protected from the rigor of the law. So likewise the Adorable Sacrament of the Altar is not only a splendid memorial of the great deeds and signal benefits of a God and Savior, it is also a place of immunity and safety where the unfortunate will find a defender and protector and the guilty be shielded against the wrath of God.

That this great eucharistic monument, so glorious to our Divine Master and so useful and beneficial to men, should be insupportable to the devil, and the object of his malignant hatred, is but natural and what might be expected. And as a matter of fact, from its institution until now, this august Sacrament has been the object of his most malevolent assaults. For the last 300 years especially he has directed against it all his power and the malice of his wrath. And how he did exult and all hell with him when the altars, the abiding place of his heavenly guest, were cast down and demolished by the Protestant sectaries, among whom are now preserved only a travesty and a mockery of that divine reality.

But the Catholic Church has ever been and ever will be the protection and defence of the Blessed

Sacrament, and her sons and daughters have stood and ever will stand as a bulwark between it and the assaults of the enemy. She will never suffer this immortal pledge of the love of her Divine Spouse to be wrested from her. She will ever encompass it with the profoundest love and veneration of her children, and she will guard it as her most precious treasure until the day when all figures and symbols having flitted away, Jesus Christ will come visibly in His own person to gather together His elect and conduct them to the home of everlasting joy.

The Blessed Eucharist is then a memorial of all the mysteries of the God-man. It reminds us of what He was from all eternity in the bosom of His Father, and above all, what He wished to be to us in time. It is the compendium and sum of all the marvels of His power, His wisdom and His love.

But it is not simply a memorial or barren representation. Jesus Christ is present and living in the Blessed Sacrament. There He renews and continues all the mysteries of His natural life. There He is incarnated and born anew day by day. There He is enclosed under the sacramental species as once He lay hidden beneath the heart of His Blessed Mother. There He dwells in a narrow tabernacle where He abides through the long hours of the day and weary watches of the

night, hidden, silent and in darkness, as once He lived in the little house of Nazareth and the workshop of Joseph. There He prays and calls sinners to repentance. There He preaches humility, poverty and mortification. There He heals the sick and welcomes with ineffable sweetness the troops of worshippers who gather about His Person to hear the words of life that fall from His sacred lips. Finally, there He perpetuates for the saving of the world the great immolation of Calvary.

We all believe this—indeed, we might grow indignant were any one to question the sincerity of our belief, and yet on sincere examination do we find our conduct towards the Blessed Eucharist in full accord with our belief? Do we manifest our faith in action as well as in word? Do we frequently visit our Lord who longs to give us His companionship in this our exile? O had we the faith and the piety of true lovers of the Blessed Sacrament, would we not delight to go to the sanctuary of our Lord and there enjoy an audience with our Heavenly King?

But alas, it sometimes happens that the great ones of this world are surrounded and shown every possible attention the livelong day, while He who is greater than all is left alone, with none to keep Him company to while away the weary hours of the day and the dreary watches of the night—none

but the tiny taper with its flickering light like a guard before the tabernacle door behind which is detained the prisoner of love.

But, then, we are so occupied—we say. We have so many things to look after that really we cannot spend hours before the tabernacle. It is very true, and our Lord is well aware of it, nor does He expect it. He is not a hard Master; indeed, He is a most indulgent friend and one easy to satisfy. He has even a delicacy lest He should make Himself burdensome to others. He wishes you to take all the time necessary for the discharge of your duties. He wishes you to look after your own affairs and your own wants—to eat, to sleep, to recreate—and all this time He is content to remain alone. But could you not at certain hours of the day find time, just a few minutes, to go and pay Him your respects and offer Him your homage? Could you not run in to see Him in the morning and dedicate to Him the first fruits of the day? Could you not come back in the evening and thank Him for the favors you have received, to ask pardon for faults committed, to commend to Him some work you have in hand—the reconciliation of those at enmity, the conversion of some sinner, the grace of a good death for some one about to depart this life?

It is not necessary to recite long prayers or to

use certain formulas. A heart full of gratitude and love will have no difficulty in expressing itself in words of tenderness and affection. It will spend before the altar a longer or shorter period according to its own pious impulses or the time at its disposal. If you are tempted, go and seek aid from the God of strength; if you know not how to act or what resolution to take in a trying and difficult case, go and consult the Father of light. If you are saddened, disturbed, cast down, go and pour out your soul to the God of all consolation. Stay a quarter of an hour, five minutes, or even less if you like, and Jesus, seeing that you think of Him, that your heart and affections are fixed upon Him, will bless you.

If we were not fascinated by the witchery of this world and enthralled by its seductions, we would have to be taken by force from the foot of the altar, so great would be its attractions, so entrancing the spell it would cast over us. There prostrate in the presence of the Lamb, ever immolated and ever living, we would wish "through Him and in Him and with Him" to offer up ceaselessly to the Blessed Trinity our adoration and our homage, and thus begin here on earth the life of the blessed in heaven.

The Blessed Eucharist being the memorial of the Passion of our Savior, is admirably adapted to teach us the necessity of Christian mortifica-

tion. The God-man practised mortification daily during the years of His life on earth. He was born in an abandoned stable. He lived unknown and in the midst of privations. He died encompassed by suffering and reproach, and the sum of His doctrine was the knowledge of the cross. His preaching was a continuous exhortation to detachment, self-denial, and renunciation. I will venture to say that now, after nineteen centuries, He preaches these virtues with a still more constraining eloquence in the Sacrament of the Altar. A prisoner, as it were, and in chains in our tabernacle, continually exposed to outrage and insult, He cries to us from His solitude and loneliness: "If any one will come after me let him deny himself" (Mt. xvi, 24). Now we know that to hope to abide in grace and acquire solid virtue without mortification is an error and delusion. The doctors of the Church and the saints are unanimous in saying: "We make progress in virtue only in so far as we do violence to ourselves."

All this requires courage, but the great fountain head of courage is the tabernacle of the altar. Here it was the saints knelt and meditated upon and made their own the words which Christ first exemplified in His Passion and which He exemplifies in the Sacrament of His love: "Unless the grain of wheat falling to the ground die, itself

remaineth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit" (Jn. xii, 24-25).

"The saints," says the great St. Alphonsus, "who neither esteem nor love any other treasure than Jesus Christ, center their hearts and all their love in the most Blessed Sacrament." They say, in the words of the same seraphic saint: "Ah, my Sacramental Lord and Divine Lover, how amiable and tender are the inventions of Thy love to gain the love of souls! O, Eternal Word, Thou in becoming man wast not satisfied with dying for us; Thou hast also given us this Sacrament as a companion, as food, and as a pledge of heaven. Thou didst make Thyself appear amongst us, at one time as an infant in a stable, at another time as a poor man in a workshop; then as a criminal on a gibbet, and now as bread on an altar. Tell us, couldst Thou invent other means to win our live? O Infinite Goodness, when shall I really begin to correspond with such refinements of love! Lord, I will live to love Thee alone. And of what use is life if I do not spend it wholly in loving and pleasing Thee, my beloved Redeemer, who hast poured out Thy whole life for me! And what have I to love if it is not Thee who art all beauty, all condescension, all goodness, all loving and worthy of love. May the very names of crib and cross and Sacrament inflame

my soul with the desire to do great things for Thee
who hast done and suffered great things for me."

Most Sweet Redeemer of the human race,
O fount of love, O source of every grace;
Be Thou our King our hearts rule o'er
That we may love Thee more and more.
Thou Shepherd e'en of the scattered sheep,
Whose erring footsteps lead them toward the deep,
Into Thy fold the lost restore,
That they may love Thee more and more.

CHAPTER X

CHRISTIAN HOPE

"Hope like a gleaming taper's light,
Adorns and cheers our way;
And still, as darker grows the night
Emits a brighter ray."

—Goldsmith.

CHRISTIAN hope has two distinct parts. On the one hand it aspires to the possession of God in heaven and counts on His help to attain this happiness. On the other it trusts in the Providence of God with a sort of filial abandonment amid all the happenings of life. In the first case we have Christian hope in the strict sense of the word. In the second case it is taken in a broader sense, and is rather confidence in God.

We have often repeated the words of the act of hope which we learned from our little Catechism. Have we ever stopped to examine these words in detail and to test their influence on our daily lives and actions? It will be worth the trouble.

"O my God, relying on Thy infinite goodness

and promises, I hope for the pardon of my sins, the assistance of Thy grace and life everlasting through the merits of Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior." In the first place it is to be noted that we have good ground for hope, abundant reason to look forward to and confidently expect the realization of our desires, viz., the pardon of sin, the help of grace and life everlasting. Our reasons are these: 1. God's infinite goodness. God created man for Himself and for happiness. Hence the insatiable longing in man's heart. But God would cease to be God if He were untrue to His nature. He is and will ever remain an infinitely good and kind and merciful, a forgiving God. 2. God's promises. God is infinite Truth who can neither deceive nor be deceived. Therefore He will, He must be true to His promises. 3. Finally, the merits of Jesus Christ. Christ died for all men, for every human soul. His arms are outstretched to embrace them all. "He was offered because He willed it" (Is. liii, 7), says Holy Scripture. His merits are infinite and all-sufficient to make adequate atonement for us. Consequently we can say: "Though I have nothing of my own that entitles me to mercy and pardon, I have the merits of my Savior, and they outweigh my offences in the balance of Divine Justice." I hope for the pardon of my sins. St. James says: "In many things we all offend." When we pause to

consider God's goodness in our regard and contrast with this our own ingratitude, which perhaps is of the darkest dye; when we consider that God has been so long-suffering and merciful as not to mete out the chastisement our offences deserved; that now the measure of His mercy must well nigh be exhausted and He is prepared to pour out the vial of His righteous indignation—when we consider all this, I say, we shall find that an unwavering confidence in God's mercy is absolutely necessary to keep us from lapsing into total indifference and giving free vent to the wicked inclinations of our heart, ending perhaps in despair—one of the worst sins of which man can be guilty. A certain gentleman, saddened by the fear of God's judgments, came to consult St. Francis one day. "Alas, my friend," replied the saint, "that is indeed a strange torture of the soul. I endured it for six weeks myself, and therefore I can sympathize with and compassionate those who are similarly afflicted. But still I must talk to you from my heart, and I want to say that whoever earnestly desires to serve our Lord and to avoid sin need not be tortured by the thought of death and judgment. At all events, if such a fear should take possession of us, it should not be a depressing and disheartening fear, but one that is sweetly tempered with confidence. God will help us, provided we ask Him to do so. Since you

desire to belong entirely to God, place all your trust and hope in Him. Whoever hopes in Him shall never be confounded." Full of these same sentiments, St. Francis said one day to Monsignor Camus: "Death ought to find us resting on two pillows, one the humble acknowledgment that we deserve nothing but eternal punishment, the other, unbounded confidence that God in His mercy will give us eternal joy."

The sooner we realize that of ourselves we are unable to accomplish anything meritorious of eternal life, the sooner we shall acknowledge our total dependence on God. "Without me you can do nothing" (Jn. xv, 5). We need God's grace to overcome temptation and avoid sin. We are repeatedly called upon to wage war against the enemies of our soul. Now we know that there are three powers allied against us—a veritable triple alliance, the world, corrupt nature and Satan. Single handed we are unequal to the strife, but "if God be with us who can be against us?" (Rom. viii, 31). His help we can have for the asking. But we must seek it with the confident assurance of being heard and helped. "I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me" (Phil. iv, 12.) "With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible" (Mt. xix, 26).

In all our undertakings we must build on the

grace and assistance of God. In our petitions to God for ourselves and for others, unless confidence is the lion's share, our petitions will remain unanswered. "Have confidence in the Lord with all thy heart and lean not upon thine own prudence" (Prov. iii, 5). A certain bishop, when asked if he thought he would receive what he was praying for, answered that he was sure he would. "I feel so confident," said he, "that I am already thanking God in advance for His favor. This I have found a very potent means of disposing God's heart to listen to my petition."

Apostolic men have accomplished wonders just because of this implicit confidence in God. They did not, of course, fold their arms and wait confidently for God to do everything. But they labored as if everything depended on themselves, and hoped for God's help as if nothing depended on themselves, but everything on God. They knew, too, that Divine Providence was watching over them, protecting and assisting them even when they did not advert to it. Take the case of a man who happens to ride home before dark some night and discovers a huge stone in the road. He knows his son will come this very way in the darkness of the night. He secures help and removes the obstacle, thus preventing a very likely accident. Now he may never have mentioned the fact to his son, but does he show less love and care

for the boy than if he were to console him in his sufferings and secure a doctor's services in the event of his son's meeting with an accident? Such is the conduct of Divine Providence, and, realizing this, our confidence ought to know no bounds. In dangers and trials God's saints have ever had confidence in a protecting Providence. It has spurred them on to greater loyalty in His holy service.

They tell of a devout officer who with his wife was making a voyage by sea. A terrible storm arose and threatened destruction to the ship and all on board. Consternation prevailed. The only one who preserved his usual calmness was the officer, and so imperturbable was he that his wife upbraided him for not realizing the terrible danger they were in. The storm subsided. The day after, as his wife was sitting on deck, the officer came rushing at her, a dagger in his hand and an angry look on his face. His wife began to laugh at him. "Why are you laughing?" said he, "are you not afraid that I'll kill you?" "Ah no," she replied, "I know my husband too well for that. I know he loves me too much to injure a hair of my head." The officer sat down and said: "My dear wife, this is just the reason I was calm and undisturbed the other day when the storm was raging. I knew that God loved us too much to permit harm to overtake us against His will. I think you forgot that."

I hope for life everlasting. "A grain of wheat," says Lassere, "fell from the hand of the sower upon a field newly plowed. It was soon covered with earth, and thought itself lost, buried alive. A little later the furrows were watered. "I am stricken with the plague," said the grain of wheat. The winter came with its snow and ice. "No more heat, no more light, no more sun," moaned the grain of wheat in its obscure retreat. Some weeks after, the grain lost its outer covering. Well, this time it thought the end had surely come. "I am becoming decomposed. It's the corruption of death." But the corruption engendered a new life. Roots spread out, a stalk formed, it grew apace, and was finally crowned with magnificent ears flowering into golden ripeness. We are grains of wheat. Why should we doubt? We shall be gathered in golden sheaves when the Master reaps the harvest. St. Francis de Sales looked upon this earth as a place of exile, and therefore he yearned with an ardent longing for the goods of the future life. He loved to repeat the words of the prophet: "Woe is me that my sojourning is prolonged" (Ps. cxix), and with the Apostle: "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. vii, 24). "O how much is eternity to be desired," wrote he, "and how contemptible the vicissitudes of time!" "Blessed are they," says he in another passage, "who place

not their confidence in this present life, but regard it merely as a bridge to pass to the life beyond, in which alone we must place all our hopes."

He loved to reflect on the sentiment expressed in these lines:

"In view of all I hope to gain
My labors here have naught of pain."

We are apt to lose sight of heaven while we are preoccupied with our many duties here below. And yet if we stop to consider the eternity of happiness awaiting us—the abode of unending bliss where, as the Apostle says: "Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered the heart of man what things God has in store for us" (Cor. ii, 9), if we pause, I say, to reflect on this, we must come to the conclusion that heaven is worth fighting for, and the modicum of labor and suffering we have to endure in winning so glorious a prize will all seem like a dream when the eternal goal is won.

"Eye hath not seen it, my gentle boy;
Ear hath not heard its deep songs of joy;
Dreams cannot picture a world so fair—
Sorrow and death may not enter there;
Time doth not breathe on its fadeless bloom,
For beyond the clouds and beyond the tomb
It is there, it is there, my child."
(Words of a mother to her dying boy.)

Sursum Corda! Lift up your hearts! Let us try to realize the full import of these words that are said daily at Holy Mass. Let us take our minds and our hearts off this earth and lift them up to heaven and to God. The mariner guides his course by the heavens and his compass. We have a dangerous course to steer. We are anxious to reach port in safety without suffering shipwreck. Our compass is our conscience—that will point out the way. But let us keep our eyes fixed above to be sure we are going ahead in the right direction. Counter attractions on earth might interfere with the needle of our conscience, but with heaven constantly in view, no earthly consideration, no labor, no trial will ever cause us to swerve one iota from our path. Like one of God's great and loyal servants we shall say: "What is this compared to eternity?" and "What doth it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" (Mt. xvi, 26). Surely nothing. But what is a life of labor and suffering compared to one moment of eternal life and happiness in the possession of God? My God, I hope for the pardon of my sins, the help of Thy grace and life everlasting through the merits of my Lord and Savior.

CHAPTER XI

DAILY VISITS

(The following is an extract of a paper read at the Eucharistic Congress by the Rev. J. Frawley, C.S.S.R.)

A FRENCH soldier in Orleans was wont to spend an hour every day in church before the Blessed Sacrament. When asked by his general what he was doing there, he gave an answer worthy of a saint: "I stand sentinel before the throne of God," he said. "It grieved me to see that the president had four sentinels, the general two, and God none. I will therefore perform this service at least for an hour." In this noble reply we have portrayed the Catholic soul throbbing with lively faith in the Real Presence and with burning love for the eucharistic heart of Jesus—the friend of friends.

What do we mean by a visit to the Blessed Sacrament. Let us listen to Cardinal Wiseman. "The familiar expression—a visit to the Blessed Sacrament," says he, "an expression so well un-

derstood in Catholic countries and communities, contains a depth of faith and of love which long descriptions would not so adequately convey. It declares at once the simple, hearty, practical belief in the Real Presence; not a vague, surmising opinion, not an uncertain hope that the Lord of glory may be there, but a plain conviction that as surely as a king dwells in his palace and may be there found by those who are privileged to enter in; or rather as certainly as He Himself dwelt once in a stable, making it His first palace on earth, and was there visited by kings from a distance and by shepherds from the neighborhood; that as truly as He abode in the house of His friends and was visited by Nicodemus for instruction or by Magdalen for pardon, so really does He now dwell among us in such sort that we may similarly come before Him and have recourse to Him in our wants. Nothing short of the liveliest faith in the mystery could have introduced or kept alive this practice. But the term is likewise the offspring and expression of love. It implies a certain intimacy, if one may use so homely a term, with Him to whom it is applied. It gets us beyond the regions of awe into those of affection. It brings us face to face with our God where we can converse as friends are wont to do."

There are two dogmas of our holy Faith on which the practice of the Daily Visits rests—

the Transubstantiation and the Real Presence. Once we believe, as we must by our holy Faith, that our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, is really, truly, substantially present in the Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, the conclusion is self-evident, that we must render unto Him the highest type of worship, the supreme adoration due to the Sovereign Being alone.

The Christian era may be divided into three periods—the first from the beginning of the era down to the eleventh century. History records that the early Christians, especially in the time of persecution were allowed to carry the Blessed Sacrament to their homes and to keep it there for the purpose of receiving Holy Communion at the first signal of danger. In the meantime these heroes and champions of the faith adored and worshipped their God and performed their devotions in His presence. Call to mind the pathetic anecdote of the youthful acolyte Tarcisius, who died a martyr to his reverence and devotion for the Body of our Lord which he was chosen to carry as Viaticum to the Christians languishing in the dungeons of Rome and to die on the morrow. Call to mind what St. Gregory Nazianzen, in the fourth century, relates of his sister, St. Gorgonia. When attacked by a mortal illness she arose from her couch at night, prostrated herself before the altar and invoked Him who is wor-

shipped there in the Sacred Host, and obtained an instantaneous cure.

In the tenth century St. Wenceslaus, King of Bohemia, used to go even during the winter nights to a church where the Blessed Sacrament was reserved. These visits enkindled such ardent love in his soul that its ardor was imparted to his body, and as his servant testified, it took from the snow its wonted cold, so that the servant walking in the footsteps of his master felt no inconvenience. Through this first period, therefore, we find unmistakable evidence of devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.

The second period dates from the eleventh to the sixteenth century. During this period devotion to the Blessed Sacrament received a new impetus because of the attacks made upon it, and because of the institution of the feast of Corpus Christi by Pope Urban IV, 1246, at the suggestion of Blessed Juliana of Liege. St. Thomas Aquinas wrote beautiful hymns and prayers for the feast of the Blessed Sacrament. St. Bonaventure, the seraphic Doctor, lived at this time and drank deep draughts of sacred wisdom at the Eucharistic fount.

From the sixteenth to the twentieth century there were different forces at work, but all contributed towards the increase and spread of devotion to the Blessed Sacrament. 1. The fierce

attacks of the so-called reformers brought forth decisions of the Council of Trent and stimulated the desire of the faithful to make reparation.

2. The institution of the Forty Hours Devotion by Father Joseph, a Capuchin of Milan in 1534.

3. The foundation of communities of Perpetual Adoration. During this period we find such illustrious saints and ardent lovers of the Blessed Sacrament as St. Ignatius, St. Vincent de Paul, Father Olier, St. Paul of the Cross, St. Francis de Sales, and St. Alphonsus Liguori.

Of all the Apostles of this beautiful practice of daily visits, St. Alphonsus may well be called the prince. He, therefore, is an authority on its benefits and blessings, having himself tasted to the full its unspeakable sweetness.

"Certainly," he exclaims, "amongst all devotions, after receiving the Sacraments, that of adoring Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament holds the first place, is the most pleasing to God, and the most useful to ourselves. You must be aware that in a quarter of an hour spent in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament you will perhaps gain more than from all the other spiritual exercises of the day. Jesus dispenses His graces in greater abundance to those who visit Him in the most Holy Sacrament. Blessed Henry Suso used to say that Jesus Christ hears the prayers of the faithful more graciously in the Sacrament of the Altar

than elsewhere. "And where," continues St. Alphonsus, "where did holy souls make their most beautiful resolutions but prostrate before the Blessed Sacrament. Be assured then that Jesus Christ finds means to comfort a soul that remains with a recollected spirit before the Blessed Sacrament far beyond what the world can do with all its feasts and pleasures."

In regard to the manner of making the Daily Visits, Father Faber aptly remarks: "The ways of making visits to the Blessed Sacrament must be as various as the souls of men. Some love to go there to listen; some to speak; some to confess to Him as if He were their priest; some to examine their conscience as before their judge; some to do homage as to their king; some to study Him as their Doctor and Prophet; some to find shelter as with their Creator. Some rejoice in His Divinity, others in His Sacred Humanity; others in the mysteries of the season. Some visit Him on different days by His different titles as God, Father, Brother, Shepherd, Head of the Church, and the like. Some visit to adore, some to intercede, some to petition, some to return thanks, some to get consolation, but all visit Him to love."

However, as in meditation so in visits to the Blessed Sacrament, it is advisable to have some method. Father Eymard suggests a division of

the time, devoting it successively to acts of adoration, thanksgiving, reparation and supplication. This is the method followed by the Fathers of the Blessed Sacrament.

The method of St. Alphonsus begins with a preparatory prayer in which he offers the visit for three ends: 1. to thank our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament for this great gift, 2. to make amends for the outrages perpetrated against Him in all the tabernacles on earth, but especially 3. to adore Him in humble compensation for all the places where He is least revered and most abandoned. This beautiful prayer has been indulged by the Sovereign Pontiff. Then follow texts from Scripture with devout reflections, edifying sayings and examples of saints and holy men; quotations from the Fathers and spiritual writers; fervent affections and aspirations, humble petitions and supplications varying for every day of the month. Into these the saint poured the fire of love that consumed his own heart.

At the end of each visit a spiritual communion so highly recommended by St. Alphonsus and other masters of the spiritual life, is to be made, and consists in an ardent desire to receive our Lord sacramentally and to embrace Him as if one were actually receiving Him. Then follows a short visit to our Blessed Lady for each day of the month, concluding with a prayer for her pow-

erful patronage. This prayer begins with the words, "Most Holy and Immaculate Mother," and is one of the most beautiful prayers ever composed in honor of the queen of heaven. It was the custom of St. Alphonsus never to separate devotion to Mary from devotion to her Divine Son because as he said, Jesus and His holy Mother were always and are now inseparably united.

Whatever method we employ, the visit should abound in acts of reparation and petition. The devotion to the Blessed Sacrament is practically identified with the devotion to the Sacred Heart, and the two are beautifully combined by devotion to the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus. With regard to petitions St. Alphonsus says, when speaking of mental prayer, that affections are better than considerations, and petitions better than affections. The easiest way to turn our visit to advantage is to employ the time in asking our Lord for the many graces we constantly need. Let us learn the art of being at home with our Lord and a peaceful and happy intimacy will spring up between us. "Refuse not, O devout soul," says St. Alphonsus, "to begin this devotion, and forsaking the conversation of men, dwell each day from this time forward for at least a quarter of an hour in some church in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. Taste and see how sweet is the Lord" (Ps. xxxiii). Only try this devotion, and from

experience you will see the great benefit you will derive from it. Be assured that the time you thus spend with devotion before the Divine Sacrament will be the most profitable to you in life and the source of greatest consolation in death and for all eternity.

That must have been a beautiful and touching scene in the sick chamber of one of the noblest of the American hierarchy, that strong and sturdy character, Archbishop Bayley. Just previous to his death, in speaking to a warm personal friend, the celebrated theologian, Father Konings, C.S.S.R., he uttered words which revealed the deep and tender devotion of his beautiful soul to the Eucharistic God. "Do you see that lamp burning there in the sanctuary?" he said. "I want my bed so placed that I can keep that lamp constantly in view." That light reminded him of the lamp of faith that lighted up his wandering footsteps when outside the true Church and brought him safe to the door of the tabernacle. Often had he gone there to offer his heartfelt gratitude to the Giver of all good things for the greatest gift of faith that made him a child of the Eucharist and taught him to know and love his Eucharistic God. In the sorrows of life he found there a consoler and counsellor. Now that he felt the hand of death upon him he hoped to see this same God not hidden under the sacra-

mental species, but face to face, and enjoy Him for all eternity.

O Thou, my Lord, whom veiled I now behold,
My soul is thirsting with desire untold,
To share the guerdon of Thy boundless grace,
The endless vision of Thy sacred face.

CHAPTER XII

FREQUENT COMMUNION

HE that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath life everlasting, and I shall raise him up at the last day" (John iv). The devotion of all devotions and the one dearest to the Eucharistic Heart of our Lord is the frequent reception of Holy Communion. When the Israelites had crossed the Red Sea they began their march through the desert towards the promised land. God gave them a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night to guide their footsteps lest they should miss their way. But they needed food to sustain their life and to give them strength to battle against the foes they would encounter. And God gave them a food from above which they called "manna" and which they gathered every day.

We, too, are on our march through the desert of life towards the promised land of eternal joy. And God has given us a light to guide our foot-



**HOLY COMMUNION OF THE
BLESSED VIRGIN MARY**

steps—the light of faith. But He knew our poor souls stood in need of food and He gave us a food from above—the bread of Angels—His own adorable Body and Blood. Partaking of this spiritual food our souls are strengthened and enabled to cope with the powers of darkness; neglecting this heavenly nourishment, we grow weak, become an easy prey to the enemy, fall languishing by the wayside, and never reach our eternal goal.

The practice of frequent Communion was recommended to the faithful and handed down to their successors by the Apostles themselves. They well knew the mind of our Lord and His divine intention in instituting the holy Eucharist. They knew it “was His delight to be with the children of men” (Prov. viii, 31), and for this reason He would be with them “all days, even to the consummation of the world” (Mt. xxviii, 20).

It was the custom in the early days of the Church for the faithful to receive Holy Communion as often as they assisted at Holy Mass, and that was generally every day. Christianity was then, we might say, but a frail little infant cradled in adversity as its Divine Founder had been.

The pagan world feared the new religion that had come to light as Herod feared the Christ-child, and the demons of persecution were let loose. The Christians were hounded like the beasts of the forest. They were brought before

the pagan princes and called upon to renounce that hated Christianity and offer sacrifice to the pagan gods. This they refused to do, and as a result they were subjected to every imaginable torture. Men, women, yea, even helpless children, were cast into loathsome dungeons, tortured on the rack and tormented by veritable demons in human form. Their bodies were saturated with oil and set on fire to illuminate the gardens of a Nero. They were driven in crowds into the vast arena which was used for the circus, and wild beasts, famished with hunger, let loose upon them—but the scene is too harrowing to describe. When the sand was strewn with scattered limbs and dyed with human blood, the sated animals withdrew.

Now, I ask, whence the superhuman courage of these heroes and heroines of those early days? Were they not of flesh and blood as we? Did they not feel suffering—did they not love comfort and ease which they might easily have enjoyed? Ah, truly, they did, but they loved their God and their soul more. But have we not the same God, the same faith and the same hope of reward? Truly we have, but count the heroes and heroines who would suffer and die for their faith today! What then, I ask, is the secret of the superhuman courage they displayed? The secret, dear reader, is this:—they received their God into their hearts

with a faith, an ardor and a love that would put us to shame, and they received Him every day.

Deep down in the bowels of the earth whither they went to assist at Mass, they gathered around the rudely constructed altar and there knelt like so many Seraphim of love till the moment they would receive their God, and when He had entered their hearts their courage was renewed for the day. Then mindful of their brethren languishing in the prisons they would send messengers bearing the Sacred Host that they, too, might communicate. Cardinal Wiseman tells of a little boy, Tarcisius by name. They chose this child to avoid suspicion. He carried the pyx with the Sacred Particles on his breast. On his way he was met by some ruffians who called to him to come and play. "O no, I cannot now," he said. And putting his hands on his breast he started to run. Angered at his refusal, they followed in haste and overtook him. "Give us the treasure you are hiding," they cried. "No, never," he replied, and closed his hands the tighter. They struck him and knocked him to the ground. Kicks and blows followed in their effort to secure his treasure. A crowd gathered around, and at length a stalwart soldier, himself a Christian, pushed his way through the crowd, and beating off the ruffians, raised the little fellow in his arms and said: "What is the matter, my dear boy?" "Oh, noth-

ing, kind sir," he faintly murmured. "Won't you take our dear Lord and bring Him to the poor people in prison—they must die tomorrow. I wanted to bring—Him—there, but I'm afraid—I—cannot." And the little boy was dead.

As time wore on, and the heavy cross of persecution was lifted from the shoulders of the Christians they began to enjoy a season of peace and prosperity. It was a calm after the storm. They came forth from their hiding places and reared magnificent temples which stood for centuries as monuments of a faith that will never die.

But during this period of peace and prosperity relaxation began to creep in regarding the reception of Holy Communion. It is a strange fact that during the Middle Ages, preeminently the ages of faith, the practice of frequent Communion was not general among the people. So much so that Holy Mother Church was called upon to perform a sad duty, namely, to oblige the faithful to go to Communion at first three times a year, and later in the Lateran Council, 1215, at least once a year, and this under severe penalties.

But let no one think of advancing this as an argument against frequent Communion and say: "During the Middle Ages Christianity was in its glory, and yet people went to Communion but seldom." How can we reconcile these apparent

contradictions? The answer, dear reader, is this: though the number of Communion was small for each individual, yet the number of Communicants in the Church was very great. Consequently the total number of Communion was probably as great as in our day. Moreover, these Communion were made in a spirit of deep faith and preceded by severe lenten penance and long prayers. In this way the Holy Eucharist communicated vigor to the whole social body. Again the people of the Middle Ages availed themselves of other channels of grace. They led lives of prayer and mortification; they avoided sensuality and self-indulgence, and consequently their moral temperament was stronger. Today we live in a vitiated atmosphere, permeated with the germs of impiety and impurity, and our moral temperament is weakened. Just as laborers working in overcrowded and unhealthy factories require more frequent and substantial nourishment than peasants breathing the pure air of the fields, so do we who are weakened by our moral surroundings require more abundant spiritual nourishment than did our forefathers in the Middle Ages, breathing as they did an atmosphere of faith and piety.

In the eighteenth century the Church of God suffered from a persecution far worse in its consequences than any she had yet endured. I mean the errors of Jansenism. It was an enemy

within the camp, and such is far worse than the enemy without. Other persecutions served but to increase the love of God; the result of this was to diminish it. Led on by a false severity and a hypocritical piety, the followers of Jansenius thought to impress the people with an awe and reverence that would not tolerate the idea of treating familiarly with our Lord. "You are not worthy to receive Communion," they said; "therefore receive very seldom or not at all." They genuflected before the Sacred Host, but locked the tabernacle door and forced our Lord to remain there a prisoner, refusing Him the most ardent desire of His Sacred Heart—to enter into the souls of the faithful. The world had never witnessed such hypocrisy before and Jansenism well deserved the compliment paid it by Satan himself through the mouth of a possessed person: "Of all the heresies," he said, "Jansenism is my masterpiece."

Perhaps the most ardent champion of the Eucharistic Heart during this stormy period was the great St. Alphonsus. He crossed swords with the Jansenists as he did with all the enemies of God and His Holy Church. "This doctrine is a most insidious one," he said, "for the poison of error is hidden by a false piety, and many are thus led astray. Their one aim and object is to kill the love of God in the souls of men; to extinguish the fire

of God's love in the hearts of His people, and they have chosen the most effectual means, and that is, to keep the faithful at a distance from the glowing furnace of divine love—the Sacred Heart of Jesus."

St. Alphonsus did not rest till he had broken down the barricades erected before the altar of God, and thrown open the tabernacle door to set at liberty the imprisoned Lord. "Come often, very often, to receive your Lord," he said. "It is His holy will. Away with false fear and dread. You have to deal with a God who said: 'Come to me all you that labor and are heavily burdened and I will refresh you.' Be not discouraged at the thought: 'I am not worthy.' Say rather to yourself: 'I need my God to become less unworthy. I need my God to fight my battles, for if God be with me who can be against me?' There is no better remedy to overcome sinful habits than the practice of frequent Communion."

"I am not worthy," you will say. "You are not worthy," is what the Jansenists said, but remember well, Communion is for you not so much a recompense as a remedy. As well might one say: "I am waiting to get well and then I shall call in a physician, or I am waiting to get warm and then I shall draw near the fire; until then I shall stand out in the cold." Such is the language

of those who say: "I am not worthy and therefore I cannot go."

The present age is the age of the Sacred Heart, the reawakening of devotion to the Blessed Eucharist. "Back to Christ," says the Sovereign Pontiff. To renew all things in Christ is the motto of the great white Shepherd Pope Pius X. Go back to the days of the early Christians and do as they have done. The social fabric is threatened with disruption; the supporting arch of society is beginning to totter, for the keystone of religion is loosening and threatens to fall. Bind it together, O ye people of God by a revival of love for the Sacred Heart.

Perhaps the example of great and good men will serve to encourage us. The renowned Berryer, a member of the French Parliament, when asked whether he practised his religion and went to Communion during Easter time, replied frankly: Yes, Sir, I go to Communion at least twice during Easter time, once in Paris to prove to my colleagues in Parliament that I am not ashamed of my faith, and again at my country home at Angerville to edify the good people of the village.

Garcia Moreno, the illustrious ex-President of Ecuador, was a man of ability, a statesman and a soldier. He never undertook any affair of importance without first going to Communion. He

consecrated his republic to the Sacred Heart and proclaimed the social and official sovereignty of Christ over his country. On the first Friday of the month he received our Lord as usual. After a fervent thanksgiving he left the church, but only to be laid low by the assassin's dagger. He died a victim of the Freemasons. His last words were: "I die, but God will never die."

It was the great German orator Windhorst who made Bismarck quail and finally overcame him and his opposition to the Church. Each one of Windhorst's great discourses was a battle fought against the Iron Chancellor for the liberty of the Church of God. He wrote every one of them before the crucifix, and like Montalembert, before delivering them went to Communion.

And so with Daniel O'Connell, the champion of Irish liberty, and so with Veuillot, the Church's defender in France, and so with Von Mallinckrodt, the hero of the Kulturkampf, and so with many others of our own day, men of ability and men of renown, men of intrepid courage and character, and the source of their courage and character is the God whom they receive in frequent Communion.

Let us endeavor to imitate them. Let us have the courage of our convictions. Receive your God into your heart, not because you are worthy, but because you wish to become so. The easy con-

ditions which the Sovereign Pontiff requires for frequent Communion show how earnestly he desires the faithful to partake of this heavenly banquet. Let us renew our allegiance to the Sacred Heart and give evidence of the courage that animates us, and the desire we have of winning the battle of life, by partaking of that heavenly manna—the Body and Blood of Christ. Thus we shall have strength to continue our onward march, to battle against the foes that beset our way, and reach the promised land of never-ending joy.

“Soul of Christ be my sanctification;
Body of Christ be my salvation;
Blood of Christ fill all my veins;
Water of Christ's side wash out my stains;
Passion of Christ my comfort be
O good Jesus, listen to me.
In Thy wounds I fain would hide.
Ne'er to be parted from Thy side.
Guard me should the foe assail me
Call me when my life shall fail me,
Bid me come to Thee above
With Thy saints to sing Thy love
World without end—Amen.”

CHAPTER XIII

THE WILL OF GOD

ALL perfection, the saints tell us, consists in the love of God. Now the perfection of divine love is the union of our will with the will of God. St. Dionysius tells us that the principal effect of love is to unite the hearts of the lovers in such a way as to produce but one will. The more intimate, therefore, our union with God the greater is our love for Him. As hatred separates the wills of enemies, love unites the wills of friends, and as St. Jerome says: "What one wills the other wills." Souls that cling to God in true love are satisfied with everything that He desires. Therefore St. Francis de Sales was right when he said that: "Piety consists in the firm determination to do all that we know to be pleasing to God." St. Thomas teaches the same. "Piety," he says, "is a readiness to do all that God requires of us."

In order that a thing may be good and perfect it must be suitable for its purpose or object.

Thus for example a tool is good only when the artisan can use it for its specific work. What could an artist do with a pencil or brush that would move contrary to the motion of his hand? Now, man is created and placed in this world to serve God and thereby render Him glory. But this exalted end he can reach only by accomplishing the will of his Divine Master. Then only is he a worthy instrument in the hand of the Omnipotent Artist, to work out the great plans of Divine Providence.

To act only according to our own inclinations is not to serve God. Suppose a man has two servants. The one works hard all day, but does things to suit himself. The other perhaps does not exert himself so much, but in everything he does, he is obedient to his master. You readily see how the latter becomes the favorite.

All the malice and wickedness of sin consists in our willing what God does not will. And in the words of Samuel to Saul, to follow one's own will is a species of idolatry (1 King xv), for such a one adores his own will instead of the will of God. But if all the wickedness of the creature consists in resisting the Creator, all virtue and goodness must consist in making God's will our own. He who desires to be a Christian according to the heart of Christ must fulfil His holy will. "I have found in David," says the Lord, "a man according to my heart who shall do all my wills"

(Acts xiii). Listen to the beautiful protestation of David: "My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready" (Ps. lvi). "Teach me to do Thy will for Thou art my God" (Ps. cxlii).

As molten wax takes the form of the receptacle into which it is poured, so a docile creature is fashioned in the mould of the divine will. Our Divine Savior and model gives us a beautiful lesson. Of every virtue that we are called upon to practise we find Him the exemplar. Listen to the words He addresses to His heavenly Father: "Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldst not, but a body Thou hast prepared for me. Then said I, behold I come. I come to fulfil Thy will" (Heb. x, 5). And again: "I am come from heaven not to do my will but the will of Him that sent me" (Jn. vi, 38). "Father, let this chalice pass from me; however, not my will but Thine be done" (Mt. xxvi, 39). "Whoever doth the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother" (Mt. xii, 50).

Following in the footsteps of their Divine Master, the saints have attached the greatest importance to the fulfillment of God's will. In all their actions they had no other end in view. Said Blessed Henry Suso: "God does not desire us to enjoy a superabundance of lights, but He does desire us to submit in everything to His holy will." In meditation, says St. Teresa, we should seek

for nothing else but to make our will conformable to the will of God, firmly convinced that in this the highest perfection consists. Our progress in the interior life is measured by our conformity to the will of God."

One day the Blessed Stephania of Sancino, a Dominican nun, was transported in spirit to heaven. There among the seraphim she saw a number of blessed whom she had known on earth. It was revealed to her that they had attained this great glory because on earth they had practised perfect conformity to the will of God. Christ Himself has held up as models the angels and saints in heaven when He said and taught us to say: "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

We possess nothing dearer than our own will, and nothing harder to renounce. The sacrifice of our will is therefore the most acceptable we can make, and it is this that God so urgently desires of us. "Son, give me thy heart"—thy will (Pv. xxiii, 26). When we sacrifice our possessions, our pleasures, or our food, we make only a partial offering, but when we give up our own will, we make as complete a sacrifice as is possible for human beings to make. In order, however, that this offering be perfect, there are two requirements. It must be complete, and it must be constant.

There are some who give their will to God, but only with a certain reserve. Such an offering cannot be wholly agreeable to Him. Others give their will to God, but take it back again. These run the risk of being abandoned by Him. To avoid such a dread calamity our whole endeavor and constant prayer should be to live and die in the performance of and in perfect conformity with God's holy will. An act of perfect conformity with the will of God is sufficient to bring us to eternal glory.

When Saul was on the road to Damascus to persecute the Christians he was struck down from his horse and heard a voice saying: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me!" (Acts ix, 4). The persecutor answered: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" Saul of Tarsus became the Apostle Paul, the vessel of election to bring God's name to the nations of the earth.

Many people conceive an idea of true piety as something that fits in with their own whims and inclinations. If they are somewhat melancholy, they think piety consists in remaining in solitude. If they are drawn to an active life, their piety is centered in external works of zeal. If they are inclined to severity, piety for them means penance and mortification. If they are naturally generous, they imagine piety consists in giving alms. Still others are much given to vocal prayers, and

some to making pilgrimages. Now all these things are good, and if prompted by a good motive are certainly the fruits of the love of Christ. But the very essence of this love consists in perfect conformity to the will of God. True piety, therefore, calls upon us to renounce ourselves and in everything to choose what is most pleasing to God, and simply because He is most deserving of it.

Works of penance, prayers and Communions are good, but only in so far as God wills them. If they are not according to the divine will they displease rather than please Him. They are means to unite us to God, but true piety, true holiness, true perfection, says St. Alphonsus, consists in doing what God desires of us. In one word, the divine will is the gauge and measure of all that is good and holy. It is holy itself and sanctifies everything, even indifferent actions, provided they are done to please God.

For this reason, said a very great servant of God, it is better to resolve to do the will of God than to seek God's glory, for if we labor for the glory of God we might deceive ourselves, and under the pretext of seeking God's glory, really seek our own will, whereas in seeking to do God's will we are at the same time promoting His glory. If we desire, therefore, to attain sanctity, and it is possible for us all in the degree to which we have

been called, "this is the will of God, your sanctification" (1 Thess. iv, 3), our sole aim and endeavor must be "to do all that God wills, and to will all that God does."

Father John Tauler relates the following which happened to himself. For many years he had earnestly besought the Lord to send him some one who would instruct him in the spiritual life. One day he heard a voice saying: "Go to that church; there you will find what you desire." The Father obeyed, and at the door of the designated church he met a barefoot beggar in rags and tatters. "Good day, my friend," said he to the beggar. "Sir," he replied, "I cannot remember that I ever had a bad day." "Well, then," continued the priest, "may God grant you a happy life!" "Thank God," he replied, "I have never been unhappy, for when I was hungry I praised the good God. When it rained or snowed, I blessed Him. When anyone despised me or cast me off or made me suffer, I gave thanks to God. I have never been unhappy because I always tried to will what God willed—bitter or sweet, agreeable or unpleasant, as long as it came from God's hand I tried to accept it with interior joy. As I wished what God wished, my desires were fulfilled, and you know a man is happy when his desires are gratified." "Where did you find God?" inquired the priest. "I spoke little with

men," he said, "in order that I might entertain myself with God, whose good pleasure was my only aim in life." Thus the devout Tauler learned the secret of sanctity and found as his master in the spiritual life a poor and humble beggar.

St. Alphonsus, in his beautiful book called, "Practice of the Love of Christ," says: "The saints have become saints by making themselves conformable to the will of God. God can grant us no greater grace than to bring us into perfect accord with His divine will." And the saint himself is a striking evidence to what a high degree of sanctity conformity with God's will can lead a human being.

As long as what happens is agreeable to human nature it is not difficult to preserve this conformity. But when things are adverse then the difficulty begins, and we manufacture many of our crosses in life by putting the transverse beam of "our rebellious will athwart the upright will of God instead of letting them run along side by side." In St. Alphonsus we see a man whose life was an almost uninterrupted chain of contradictions and sufferings. Cardinal Gibbons when once speaking of the life of St. Alphonsus said: "I think that the most noticeable trait of resemblance in his life to that of our Lord was this: he was always on the cross." And yet the saint

seemed just as satisfied and content as if everything happened according to his desires. "O will of God," he exclaimed, "how dear art thou to me! I shall live and die united to thee. Thy pleasure is my pleasure. Thy desires shall also be my desires. My God, grant that I may live only to will what Thou willest, only to love Thee and Thy amiable will. O will of God, I love Thee as I love God Himself, for Thou art one with Him—yes, Thou art God Himself. As often as I say: 'Lord, Thy will be done,' I desire thereby to protest my willingness to accept everything Thou hast destined for me in time and eternity. I desire no other offices, no other talents, no other dwellings, no other garments, no other food, no other health than Thou hast destined for me. Success or failure, love or hatred, praise or calumny: It is all the same, Lord. If Thou desirest me to be sick and sore, covered with wounds, stripped and abandoned by all; if Thou desirest me to have but one degree of love, of grace and of glory, Thy holy will be done. I accept in particular the death Thou hast destined for me, with all the pains which may accompany it. Do with me what Thou wilt, only permit me to love and serve Thee here that I may love and enjoy Thee hereafter."

"Which would you prefer," St. Francis de Sales was once asked, "to live in perfect health

or to spend the rest of your life a paralytic on your bed?" "I would like neither the one nor the other," he replied; "I am indifferent, and in one thing or the other I wish only the good pleasure of God." "But in health you could accomplish more good than if you were sick." "I do not wish," he replied, "to choose the manner of serving my God. In health I shall serve Him in action; in sickness I shall serve Him in suffering. It is for Him to choose what pleases Him best. In either way I shall do His will and that is enough for me." "But would you prefer to live long and gain more merit or die in a short while and suddenly?" "I do not wish to have my own will in that at all. A long life, a short life, a sudden death, they are all indifferent to me. I abandon myself without reserve to Divine Providence and to the care which from all eternity God has resolved to show regarding my life and death." "But then would you not prefer, when leaving this life to go straight to Paradise rather than be detained in Purgatory?" "I shall willingly go to the place that God assigns me, and be it where it may I shall be content. With the will of God Purgatory would be a Paradise for me, and without the will of God, Paradise would be a Purgatory."

One year when he had proposed to preach a lenten course, he was taken sick with a lingering

fever. This disappointment, far from eliciting a word of regret or complaint, did not cause him a moment's loss of serenity. "If God," said he, "does not want me to serve Him by preaching, but by suffering, His holy will be done!" They told him one day that the heretics were scheming to drive him from his episcopal see. "Ah, well," replied he with calmness, "I shall be freer then to serve God and souls." But some one added, "they will put you in prison." "Very well," he replied, "I shall have more leisure to pray to God and to write something for His glory. This will not trouble me in the least. May God's holy will be done."

The holy bishop did not object to yielding somewhat to that natural feeling of grief at the loss of our relatives, on condition that it in no way diminish conformity to the will of God. I took care not to say to you: "Do not weep," wrote he to a person who had lost a dear sister, "no, for it is proper for you to weep a little in testimony of the sincere affection you bore her, after the example of our dear Master who wept over Lazarus. But do not weep as much as they do who are given wholly to this miserable life, and forget that we are all going into eternity, where, if we have lived a good life here we shall be reunited to our dear departed, never more to be separated from them. That imaginary insensi-

bility of those who would have us think we are not living beings, always seemed to me a chimera or idle fancy. But still after we have paid tribute to the inferior part of our soul, we must do our duty towards the superior or nobler, for here, seated on a throne is the spirit of faith which must console us in our afflictions and by our afflictions. Happy are they who rejoice in affliction and turn absinthe into honey."

When he assisted the dying he recommended nothing more earnestly than the union of our will with the will of God. "O God," he would have the patient say, "may Thy will be done and not mine. Do with me as seems best to Thee." And the reason he gave was this: "To die in the bosom of the divine will is to fall asleep on the breast of Jesus Christ, and God cannot permit the loss of a soul that dies in the union of its will with the divine." "Open the arms of your will," he cries out, "embrace the cross lovingly, submitting to the most holy will of God and chanting the eternal hymn: Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Pains in themselves cannot be loved, but viewed in the light of the will of God who ordains them, they become infinitely amiable and more precious than anyone can ever say. God's will be done!



OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP.


CHAPTER XIV

OUR LADY OF PERPETUAL HELP

"Where the snows are whitely gleaming,
And no song bird ever sings,
Where the tropic sun is beaming,
On the red flamingo's wings,
Where the diver seeks for treasure
In the ever changing sea
Mother of Perpetual Succor
Thousands throng for aid to thee.

"Saint and sinner, sick and healthy,
High and low and weak and bold,
King and subject, poor and wealthy,
Wise and simple, young and old,
In their dread of some tomorrow
In distress of soul or brain,
Mother of Perpetual Succor,
Seek thy aid and not in vain."

—E. Beck.

 HE history of devotion to our Lady of Perpetual Help has often been told, but like the Gospel narrative, it is a story ever old yet ever new, a story that grows in interest with every telling.

Up to the close of the fifteenth century the picture of our Lady of Perpetual Help, which betrays a master's hand and is done in Byzantine

style, was in the Island of Crete, now called Candia, and even then was venerated as miraculous. About that time a certain wealthy merchant, very devoted to the Mother of God, was obliged by circumstances to leave the island. He had often prayed before the picture of our Lady, and he felt sad at the thought that it might fall into the hands of the Turks and be dishonored or destroyed. To prevent this he obtained possession of the picture and started on his journey to Italy. They had hardly put out to sea when a terrible storm arose. The boat was tossed about by the fury of the waves, and there seemed no hope for safety. In the midst of their consternation, the merchant brought the picture of our Lady on deck and exhorted them to have recourse to the Mother of God, for, said he, she is the Star of the Sea and a Mother of Perpetual Help. They fell on their knees and began to pray, and at once the storm abated; the clouds dispersed, the sea grew calm, the boat was steadied and went swiftly on her course, reaching Ostia, the sea port of Rome.

Now it was not the merchant's intention to remain in Rome. He intended to travel further and bring the picture with him, but evidently Divine Providence had something else in view. The merchant took sick and died at a friend's house in the city of Rome. He bequeathed the picture to his friend, with the strict injunction to

preserve it with the greatest care, and have it placed in some church for public veneration. The friend promised to do so, but neglected to keep his word, and the picture remained in his house. This evidently displeased the Mother of God, for she appeared three times to the man of the house and warned him that his neglect would bring severe chastisement on himself and his family. He still hesitated. Our Lady appeared again and told him that he himself would be carried from the house, since he neglected to remove the picture. He took sick and died in a few days. The widow of the unfortunate man, even after the loss of her husband, refused to relinquish her hold on the coveted picture, until her little daughter came running in one day and said: "O mother, I have seen a very beautiful woman, and she said to me: 'Go at once to your mother and say, Our Lady of Perpetual Help wishes to be placed in a church.'" This brought her to her senses, and she made up her mind, when some wicked woman hearing of it, strove to persuade her not to listen to such nonsense. These words were hardly uttered when the woman was seized with violent pains and seemed at death's door. Sorrow took possession of her heart, and confident of assistance, she touched the picture and found immediate relief.

There was no longer any hesitation about bring-

ing the picture away. The doubt arose now, where should it go! Our Blessed Lady appeared again to the little girl, and said: "I wish to be between my beloved church of St. Mary Major and the church of my beloved adopted Son, St. John." Now, between these two basilicas stood the church of St. Matthew, in charge of the Augustinian Monks. The picture was brought there in great solemnity on March 27, 1499, in presence of a large concourse of people. On that day began the series of miracles which for three hundred years threw a lustre of glory around our Lady of Perpetual Help. The old church of St. Matthew was destroyed by a hostile nation at the beginning of the nineteenth century. On the spot once occupied by St. Matthew's the church of St. Alphonsus was erected and placed in charge of the Redemptorists. In the year 1865, with the approbation of Pope Pius IX., the picture hidden away in the interim was solemnly brought to the church of St. Alphonsus and once more placed in the spot designated by Our Lady herself. Crowds gathered and knelt before the shrine. Ere long it was decorated with the votive offerings of grateful hearts, for scarcely a day passed but some one found help from this heavenly mother. A diadem of gold was made and set with precious stones to be placed upon the picture of Our Lady, as a token of the love and gratitude of favored

children. As the knowledge of the miraculous picture spread, devotion sprang up in all parts of the world. Copies of the picture were made and touched to the original. Our Blessed Lady has deigned to help even those who pray before these copies. The copy at the shrine of Our Lady in the Mission Church of Boston is already famous for the wonders that have been wrought in this favored church.

In the year 1871 a confraternity was established, and in 1876 erected into an Archconfraternity of Our Lady of Perpetual Help and St. Alphonsus. It is most fitting that the name of St. Alphonsus should be associated with that of Our Lady in this Archconfraternity, for he was one of the greatest champions our Blessed Lady ever had. He defended her against the attacks of her enemies, spread devotion to her everywhere and left as a precious heirloom to his spiritual sons—the Redemptorists—an ardent love and tender devotion to the Mother of God. The first of the many works published by St. Alphonsus, in 1750, was the "Glories of Mary," a veritable mine of theology and devotion. For ten years St. Alphonsus studied the Saints and Fathers of the Church, to fill his mind and heart with the tradition of the Church on true devotion to Our Lady. Out of the abundance of material gathered he composed a book in honor of the Blessed Virgin that

throws down the gauntlet to all the attacks of the enemy. On the first page appeared a picture of the Blessed Mother, with the motto: "Spes Nostra Salve!" Hail our Hope!

The book is dedicated to Jesus, Son of Mary, in these beautiful words: "Vouchsafe to accept this little homage of the love I bear Thee and Thy Divine Mother. May it, with Thy blessing, fill all hearts with loving confidence in the Immaculate Virgin whom Thou hast made the hope and refuge of all Thou hast redeemed. And as a reward of my humble labor grant that I may love Mary, as I wish to see her loved by all my readers." He then turns to the Blessed Mother and says: "You know, my Mother Mary, that, after Jesus, I have put all my hope in thee. You know that by preaching I have striven to penetrate all hearts with a tender and salutary devotion to thee, but my health is enfeebled and my end is approaching. Hence, before going to my eternal home, I have resolved to leave to the world this little book, that it may continue not only to preach for me, but inspire others to preach thy glories and thy boundless mercy to thy faithful servants."


To return to our subject. The members of the Archconfraternity of Our Lady of Perpetual Help and St. Alphonsus are duly enrolled on the register and promise to practise particular devotion to the Blessed Mother under this special title.

Many plenary and partial indulgences may be gained.

The obligations are little or nothing—simply to be enrolled and recite an act of consecration. There is no reason, therefore, why we should not all be members of the Archconfraternity. It gives honor to our Blessed Mother and confers many benefits on ourselves. And what devoted son or daughter will fail to honor the most amiable of mothers and to strive to win for her the esteem and love of all. Mary our Mother was the channel through which Jesus, the author of grace, came to us, and God has willed that she should continue to be the channel of His grace to men. All graces come to us through her intercession, and, as St. Alphonsus beautifully says: "She is omnipotence on bended knee." Every heavenly gift is a golden coin stamped with the King's image, but also, on the reverse, with the image of the queen.

CHAPTER XV

THE BATTLE OF LEPANTO

T was in the year 1571. St. Pius V. sat in the chair of St. Peter, and with a gentle firmness ruled the Christian world. The aim of his life as Pope had been to promote peace and harmony among Christian princes and to spread the kingdom of God on earth. He well knew the dangers to which the Church was exposed, and hence, like a faithful shepherd, he kept constant watch lest the wolf should enter the fold. And he had good reason to be on the alert. As he stood in the watch tower of the Vatican, his vigilant eye scanning the horizon, he beheld in alarm and almost dismay a dense cloud appear. As it drew nearer and nearer it grew in density till it well nigh obscured the light of the sun, and threatened to burst and deluge the earth with another flood.

Selim the Second, the conquerer of the unruly Turks, was in the noon-day splendor of a victorious reign. His onward march had suffered no

serious check, and the dead lay strewn in his wake like the wheat that the scythe of the reaper has laid low. And now he turned his haughty eye towards Christendom, and he swore a terrible oath. He swore to subjugate the Christian world—dethrone its Christ and place Mohammed in His stead: "The cross shall fall, and in its place the crescent shall proclaim that Christ is dead and Allah is our God." Onward he rushed with his Moslem host like a cloud that portends a deadly and destructive storm. The Mediterranean Sea was covered with his fleet. Greece and Hungary had capitulated, and he descended upon the Island of Malta. But his first attempt was defeated by the heroism of the Grand Master of the Knights, La Valette. Enraged at this defeat and mad with the desire of revenge, the Turks attacked the Island of Cypress and sated their fiendish rage in torrents of human blood. A Christian legate was sent to treat with their commander. He was spurned and spat upon and taunted with the words: "Where is now your Christ, and why does He not free you from our hands?" They treated him with a cruelty too barbarous to describe, until death came to his relief. The last words on his dying lips were: "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do" (Lu. xxiii, 24).

And now Pius V. sounded the note of alarm. He called upon the princes of the Christian world

to rally round the standard of the cross and fight to save their altars and their homes. But, sad to say, there were but few who volunteered to stem the tide of Moslem invasion and save the Christian world. Only the Venetians and the Spaniards came and joined their forces with the little army of the Pope. Don Juan of Austria was placed in chief command. Prayer and fasting were prescribed throughout the world, and the Sovereign Pontiff himself, like another Moses on the mount, stretched out his arms in fervent supplication that God might lend His aid to those who were battling in a righteous cause.

At sunrise, on the 7th of October, 1571, the Turkish fleet was drawn up in battle array in the form of a crescent, the emblem of Mohammed. They numbered in all 254 galleys and 84 ships of every class. At the sight of this terrible array the commander of the Christian forces raised his standard aloft and displayed a picture of the Redeemer of the world. "Christian soldiers," he cried out, "you are come to fight the battle of the cross, to conquer or to die. But be the issue victory or death, do your duty well and win a glorious immortality." Then, falling on their knees, they begged the God of armies to assist them and crown their efforts with success. They closed in on the Turks, and the terrible battle began. For six long hours it raged with fury and with dread-

ful loss. For a time it looked as though the Turks would win. The left wing of the Christians began to yield; eight galleys of Venetians were sunk, and the right wing was in imminent danger. But suddenly the tide of victory turned. In the very heat of the conflict the two flagships were engaged in a fierce encounter. Twice the Christians were driven back, but in a third attempt, the Turkish commander fell. Ali Pasha was slain and his head raised aloft on a Christian galley. The defeat of the Turks was complete and the power of Mohammed broken. Two hundred and ten Turkish galleys were either captured or sunk. Twenty-five thousand infidels were slain and twelve thousand Christian slaves were freed from the Turkish galleys. The Christians had lost fifteen galleys and eight thousand men.

On the very day of the famous battle Pope Pius was holding a council with his advisers in Rome. Suddenly he rose up, went to the window and gazed intently toward the sky. Then closing the window he turned towards the Cardinals and said: "This is no time to talk of business; let us go and give thanks to God in His temple; our arms have just been blest with victory." And the Holy Pontiff, shedding tears of joy, fell on his knees in his oratory and poured forth the gratitude of his heart to his good and bountiful Lord. A few days later it was learned that at the very same hour the


Christians had defeated the Turks and the cross of Christ had triumphed over the crescent of Mohammed in the Gulf of Lepanto. In gratitude for this signal victory Pope Pius decreed that throughout the Christian world the feast of the holy rosary should be solemnized on the first Sunday of October, and to the litany of the Blessed Virgin he added the invocation: "Help of Christians, pray for us."

Christian reader, this remarkable incident speaks for itself. It were superfluous to point out the lessons it should teach. But while wreathing the garland of roses for the fair brow of the Mother of God, for this we do when we "tell our beads," remember that "the arm of God is not shortened"; it is as strong to-day as in the days of long ago, and

When clouds of adversity gather,
And hope to all seeming has fled,
Pray God with more earnest pleading,
He will help you, for so He has said.

CHAPTER XVI

THE REDEMPTION OF CAPTIVES

 IN the year of our Lord 1169 there was born at Faucon, on the borders of Provence, a child that was destined to do great things in the interest of his fellow-man. Baptized John in honor of the Precursor of our Lord, he was dedicated to God by a vow which his mother had made. The flower of virtue found excellent soil in his little heart, and thrived in the atmosphere of a Catholic home. While still a young man he displayed an extraordinary love for the poor and the sick whom he visited every week. In due time he obtained his father's consent to go to Paris, where he devoted himself to study, with remarkable success. He won the degree of doctor of divinity with uncommon applause, though his modesty made him reluctant to accept that honor. He was ordained priest and said his first Mass in the chapel of the Bishop of Paris, surrounded by a host of distin-

guished and admiring friends. According to the legend, he had a vision during his first Mass that seemed to indicate to him the vocation he was to follow in accordance with the decrees of Divine Providence. He saw the image of an angel clad in a white garment, to the front of which was attached a blue and red cross; the angel's hands were outstretched in an attitude of protection over some slaves in chains.

St. John felt himself called by God to come to the relief of these helpless creatures, and accordingly, in company with St. Felix of Valois, he earnestly considered the establishment of an order of religious for the redemption or freeing of Christian captives. Pope Innocent III. approved of the plan, and the new religious received as official title, "The Order of the Most Holy Trinity for the Redemption of Captives." During the first year of its establishment two of the religious went to Morocco and redeemed 186 Christian slaves. The following year St. John himself went to Tunis, where he purchased the liberty of 110 more. Subsequently he went to Spain and redeemed many in captivity under the Moors.

On his second voyage to Tunis, St. John suffered very much from the infidels, enraged as they were at his zeal and success in exhorting the poor slaves to patience and constancy in their faith. As he was returning with 120 slaves whom

he had ransomed, the barbarians took away the helm of his vessel and tore all its sails, that it might perish in the sea. The saint, full of confidence in God, begged Him to be their pilot. He hung up his companions' cloaks for sails, and, with crucifix in hand, knelt on the deck and joined the others in singing psalms. After a prosperous voyage they landed safely at Ostia, Italy. St. John lived to be 61 years of age and died in the year 1230. He was buried in the church of St. Thomas, where his monument still remains, though his body was later removed to Spain.

In order to procure means for the ransom of the poor captives, it was the custom of the good religious to go about from place to place soliciting alms from those whom they could interest in the unhappy state of their fellow-beings. The relatives and friends of the slaves were appealed to, and begged to make some sacrifice for the liberation of their kith and kin. In many instances the appeal met a hearty and generous response. In other cases it was left unheeded, doubtless through poverty, or perhaps because of an inexplicable indifference, for then, as now, the old adage obtained—"Out of sight, out of mind."

The religious would then set sail and brave the dangers of a stormy, pirate-ridden sea, till they landed at last on the shores of Africa or some other country where the Christian captives were

suffering ill-treatment at the hands of their barbarous masters and sighing for some one to break their shackles and liberate them from their galling yoke. How eagerly they would rush to the shore when they learned of the ship's approach! How anxiously they would press around the good religious and, full of joyous expectancy, cry out: "Have you seen my friends? Did they send my ransom money? Shall I be free, oh tell me, shall I be free now?" We can well imagine their transports of joy when the poor captives heard in reply: "Yes, we have seen your friends and they have given us the means to purchase your freedom and bring you home."

But it were vain to attempt to describe the sorrow and anguish of those whom the religious were unable to assist. "We have seen your friends," they would say, "but they could not or would not help us to come to your relief. Have patience and place your trust in God; perhaps some one will come who can aid you." And the poor captives would return from the shore with the yoke of servitude more heavy and galling than before. Their fondest hopes had been blasted and a new affliction had been added to their unhappy lot. More gall had been poured into their bitter cup, for their own friends had forgotten them, or had refused to come to their aid. Truly they could say, with the prophet, "If my enemy had done

this I would have borne with it, but thou, my friend" (Ps. liv).

Dear reader, there is a prison where thousands of Christian souls are detained. Their sufferings are very great and their lot lonely and sad. I mean the prison of purgation that Catholics call Purgatory. They "shall be saved, yet so as by fire" (1 Cor. iii, 15). Powerless to help themselves, they bear striking witness to the justice of God, for "nothing defiled can enter heaven" (Apoc. xxi, 27); and they must suffer "till the last farthing is paid" (Mt. xxv, 26). But God in His goodness gives ear to our prayers for these suffering souls, and hence it is that a ceaseless cry goes up from the dark and dreary dungeon: "Have pity on me; have pity on me, at least, you my friends, for the hand of the Lord hath touched me" (Job. xix, 21).


And the liberating angel wings his flight and descends to the dungeon's gates. And the hapless souls gather around and in tearful accents cry out: "O angel of God, have you come to ransom me to-day? Have you seen my friends? Have they offered their prayers and tears? Have they besought the Adorable Blood of the Lamb to wash out my stains and bring me to my celestial abode?" Ah, happy the soul when it hears these joyous words: "Come, blessed soul, your ransom has been paid. God's justice is content with the satis-

faction your loved ones have made." But sad, ah sad the lot of the poor abandoned souls whom friends have forgotten when the floral wreath was placed on the cold grave and no one left but the heartless tombstone to say to the passerby: "May they rest in peace."

Kind reader, what of your departed ones? Has the liberating angel gone empty handed from your door, or have you burdened him down with prayers and good works for the ransom of their suffering souls? "May the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace."

CHAPTER XVII

SOCIALISM

 HERE exists in the social body today, and especially among the laboring classes, a certain spirit or feeling, we may call it, that in late years, owing to economic conditions, has been fast gaining ground. We may well describe it as a ferment of dissatisfaction or the gathering of a rebellion, a revolt against the existing order of things. It is like the lowering clouds that precede a storm. There is a strained relation between the classes and masses. There is a want of understanding, an increasing hostility between the employer and the working man. The few are amassing enormous wealth, while the many are pinched with poverty. The laboring classes are co-operating to defend their interests, and the employers are banding together to resist the demands of the working man. This state of things has given rise to much apprehension. Wise men are discussing

it; practical men are proposing schemes. In fact, there is no question that has taken a deeper hold on the human mind.

Now to remedy these wrongs, a society has been established the members of which call themselves Socialists. It is their aim and object by the spread of their doctrines to bring about a universal change in the existing order of things. Before considering their tenets it may be useful to know that there are different kinds of Socialists. I shall briefly mention the principal divisions or classes.

1. Social Democracy or Collectivism. Its adherents demand that the state appropriate and administer all capital and instruments of labor.

2. Positive Communism demands the transfer of all goods to one administration, permitting the use of some few things as private property.

3. Moderate Positive Communism desires that all capital and instruments of labor be taken and administered by labor organizations.

4. Negative Communism wishes all private property to be abolished.

5. Agrarian Socialism demands the confiscation of land.

6. Anarchy is revolt against authority.

Now from the mere mention of some of the phases of Socialism we see its principal disturbing factors to be: 1. A false idea regarding

the ruling *power*. They maintain that the source of power is the people; that the people have conferred it and can revoke it at pleasure. This is a mistake and in direct opposition to the teaching of the Catholic Church. The power to rule or govern may and often does come through but not from the people. The teaching of the Catholic Church is contained in the words of St. Paul to the Romans, xiii, 1-7: "There is no power but from God, and those that are, are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God. And they that resist purchase to themselves damnation. Render, therefore to all men their dues. Tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor." A Catholic who holds and advocates this erroneous opinion of the Socialists is an undutiful, a disloyal son of Holy Mother Church. 2. The majority of Socialists are opposed to *private ownership*. "This doctrine of Communism, viz., of transferring property from private individuals to the community will not and cannot improve the condition of things. If it ever took place the working man would be the first to suffer. Moreover, it is emphatically unjust, since it is robbing the lawful owner of what belongs to him. Property in many cases is what the laborer has to show for hard earned wages. Now who has

the right to deprive the wage-earner of the liberty of disposing of his wages to better himself and his family. And Socialists by attempting this aim a blow at the best interest of the bread winner.

Again, every man has by nature the right to possess property as his own. This is one of the chief points of distinction between man and the animal creation. And if that man be the father of a family, his right is greater still, for it is a most sacred law of nature that a father should provide food and all necessities of life for his children. This is done effectively by the ownership of lucrative property which a father can transmit to his children by inheritance." Leo XIII, Condition of the working classes. 3. Another point that deserves the consideration of Catholic men is this: Socialism has or is a *religion*. It is not merely a philanthropic, political or economic movement, as many of its adherents would have us believe; it has its distinctly religious tenets. This may come as a surprise to many an unsuspecting man who has been led to believe that Socialism leaves the subject of religion out of the question altogether. Now, the fact is that you can hardly take up a book treating of Socialism by its advocates without finding some reference to the doctrines of the German pantheist Hegel. Hegel, the great prophet and high priest of Socialism, taught that religion, like everything

else, follows the law of evolution. It is now time he thinks for Christianity to be supplanted by the worship of Humanity which, he claims, is the true divinity.

Reducing this theory to a practical working program, Marx writes: "We wage war against all prevailing ideas about religion. The idea of God is the keystone of a perverted civilization, and it is needful to sweep it from the face of the earth" (*Secret Societies in Switzerland*). "God and humanity," says Proudhon, "are two irreconcilable enemies and the first duty of an enlightened man is to drive away mercilessly the idea of God from the mind and the conscience. Atheism ought to be the law of morals and the intelligence, for Atheism is idealism raised to its highest power" (*Confession d'un Revolutionnaire*).

Catholics must, therefore, be extremely on their guard not to be led into a society so manifestly opposed to the spirit and doctrines of their Holy Church. There is only one remedy for existing evils, and it is the old, old remedy. The reason that evils exist is because the remedy has not been persistently applied. This remedy, this panacea for the ailments under which society is groaning, is the teaching of Jesus Christ given to us through His mouth-piece, the Catholic Church. As Pope Leo XIII well said: "Mankind must go back to Christ." And the prodigious task that our pres-

ent glorious Pontiff Pius X has set himself is "to renew all things in Christ."

True it is we cannot have everything on this earth as we desire. In heaven alone we can expect that, but we can, by following the Gospel precepts, lighten the burden and smooth the road of our earthly pilgrimage.

Nature has endowed men differently, and differences of fortune is the natural result. His Eminence Cardinal Gibbons says: "It is in accordance with the economy of Divine Providence that in this world there should be, and that there is now, and always will be, disparity and inequality of rank, station and wealth in every department of human activity.

"Order is heaven's first law; and this confessed,
Some are and must be greater than the rest."

To begin with the individual man, you have a head to which many members are united. In every sound body, the head where reason sits enthroned, exercises supreme control over the members. In every family the father and mother preside. The children and the other members of the household obey. If they rebel against parental authority, peace is banished from the domestic circle. In every well regulated city the mayor and municipal council rule. If their authority is subverted, sedition will hold sway.

As long as the world lasts some men will be rich, others will be poor, some weak, others strong, some talented, others dull of comprehension. Some will be enterprising and industrious, others will be apathetic and indolent. You might as well, therefore, attempt to stem the tide of the ocean or to force back the Mississippi to its source as to oppose this law of social inequality. The most mischievous and dangerous individual in the community is the demagogue who is sowing the seeds of discontent among the people. He is disseminating the baneful doctrine of Socialism which would bring all men down to a dead level, would paralyze industry, and destroy all healthy competition."

The existing inequality of conditions no Socialists will ever change. To suffer and endure is the lot of humanity. And our Lord never said that temporal prosperity is the gate to eternal happiness. Patience and resignation are the balm to soothe the poor and oppressed, and the hope of better things will sustain them under the burden of the trials of life. The great law of Christian charity says that class should help class. All should strive to live in harmony, each assisting the other. The one stands in need of the other and the other of the one. Capital cannot do without Labor, nor Labor without Capital. Mutual agreement results in good order, while perpetual conflict produces

confusion. Now religion and religious principles alone are the harmonizing elements, for unless conscience impels both classes to respect the rights of each other nothing ever will.

The wealthy are the stewards of God's Providence and what they do for the poor they do for God. "As long as you did it to the least of my brethren you did it to me" (Mt. xxiv, 40). And finally, the poor must try to accept their lot. In God's sight poverty is no disgrace and there is nothing to be ashamed of in seeking one's bread by labor. Our Lord Himself was amongst the poorest of the poor—and He was our model—the Way, the Truth and the Life. Therefore, in whatever condition of life you may be, remember your first and most sacred duty is to be loyal and obedient children of Holy Mother Church. Like a watchful and anxious mother she is ever on the alert to guard you against snares and pitfalls. When she warns you against the dangerous societies listen to her warning, though you may not always see the reason why. Now she says to you: Socialism is a menace to Christian society. With all the cunning of the arch-fiend it represents itself as an angel of light—a purely economic movement for the betterment of existing conditions and the alleviation of the poor and laboring classes. It glories in the fact that the society is already assuming Samson-like proportions

and strength. Socialism may delude the unwary with the promise of a Philistine banquet, but when it begins to exercise its power and in blind fury lays hold of the pillars of religion and morality a terrible crash will come and the ruin of society will follow. But its principles and its practice will never find an advocate, but always a strenuous opponent in

A LOYAL CATHOLIC

"Don't look for flaws as you go through life
And even when you find them
'Tis wise and kind to be somewhat blind
And look for the virtue behind them.
For the cloudiest night has a hint of light
Somewhere in its shadow hiding;
It is better by far to hunt for a star
Than the spots on the sun abiding.

"The world will never adjust itself
To suit your whim to the letter.
Some things must go wrong your whole life long .
And the sooner you know it the better.
It is folly to fight with the Infinite,
And go under at last in the wrestle,
The wiser man shapes into God's plan
As the water shapes into a vessel."

—Anon.

The End.



